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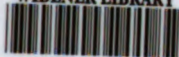
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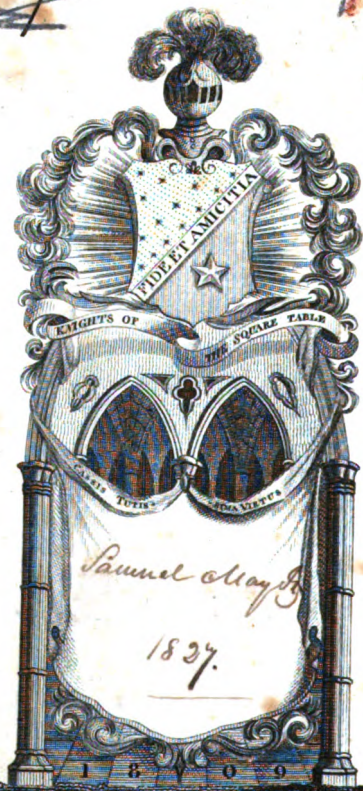


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# **HIGH LIFE,**

**A NOVEL.**

“ ‘Tis from **HIGH LIFE** high characters are drawn.”

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**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL I.**

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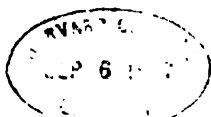
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**1827.**

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# HIGH LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

*"Here woman reigns, the mother, daughter, wife,  
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow path of life;  
Around her knees domestic duties meet,  
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet."*

"WHAT a beautiful evening this is!" said the Countess of Malverton; as she let fall the crimson curtain she had held aside for the last few minutes to look out.

"Yes," replied her mother, an old lady engaged in working, at a table, "I was admiring the appearance of the corridor above stairs, (as I passed through it just now,) where the moonlight is shining in full radiance on the old pictures."

"I think it is probable," observed Lady Malverton, "that either Mr. Winters or his son will walk over to tea this evening. It is an age since we have seen the former, and the latter may have returned from London, and brought me the packet I expect from my Lord."

"Did you request him to call at the office?" asked her mother.

"No, but his father was good enough to say he would mention it when writing to him."

"It would be an agreeable surprise to find the parcel dated from the Cape," observed Mrs. Vigers.

"Too agreeable to be probable," replied the Countess; "indeed, I am sure my lord could not leave India at present, unless he chose to resign his governorship: a thing it would not be prudent to do. I only fear," added her ladyship, "he will be for having me and the girls over, and that, much as I wish to be again with him, would not be at all pleasing to me."



"You surely would not run such a risk," said Mrs. Vigers, "as to take out Georgiana, after the physicians gave you their opinion so strongly on the impropriety of such a measure ; even if you and Alicia were obliged to go ?"

"Ah ! my dear mother, the question is how could I leave her ?" replied Lady Malverton, looking fondly at her daughter, a beautiful girl, apparently about seventeen, who was playing on the piano ; "and it is, you know, nearly two years since I consulted them. She was then just recovering from illness, and consequently extremely delicate. I should not have thought of asking an opinion on the subject, had not the Earl so wished me to accompany him out to India ; and to have gone and left her in that state would have been impossible."

"Georgiana certainly looks healthier than she did when she came from London," observed Mrs. Vigers, "though she will never, I fear, be very strong."

"Her looking better is easily accounted for," said the Countess ; "here she has the advantage of bathing, regular hours, and exercise, whereas, both in town and at Granville Castle, from the immensity of company my lord's public situation obliged us to keep, regularity and early hours were things quite out of the question : and young as she was, circumstances combined to make Georgiana participate in these disadvantages. My brother-in-law was so doatingly fond of her, he always insisted on her being allowed to dine at the hour we did, frequently keeping her up to supper, taking her to play or concert ; or anywhere in short that she could be brought. Her father made just as much of her, and his mother often prevailed on me to let her go to places, and pay visits, which, though I foolishly consented, I knew were improper for her. But you have often heard me describe our London life, and I am sure I never look at Georgiana, but to reproach myself for not having accepted your kind offer, and sent her and her sister down here at that time."

"Well, Alicia, do not have reason to reproach yourself again, by taking them out to India ; but leave them

with me, and I promise that both Alicia and Georgiana shall be as well taken care of as if you were here."

"I thank you, my dear mother, and I have not the least doubt of it: but I will not anticipate what would be to me the greatest of misfortunes—going to India and being separated from my children—by making any promise."

"I hope, indeed," said Mrs. Vigers, "that you will not be called on to make such a sacrifice, and that my offer may be a resource to which you will never have necessity to resort. But what is Sophy reading so intently?" inquired the old lady, to change a topic which she perceived almost overcame her daughter, "Is it a novel?"

"No, indeed, Ma'am," returned Miss Darcliff, looking up with a smile.

"I believe Georgiana is the young lady for novels," said the Countess.

"I assure you, you are mistaken, Mamma," returned her daughter, rising from the piano; "I never read them when I have anything else to do."

"Let me see," said Mrs. Vigers, "though it is a long time since I heard anything of the kind, whether I could not pretty well describe the commencement of a romance:— 'On a gloomy evening in the month of November—(is not that the month, Georgiana?)—when the wind whistled through the long, unfrequented galleries, and shook the ancient tapestry of Castle ———— salvo; while the trees swung their branches in terrific sounds, and the old casements rattled as if they were about to crack; lights were seen flitting in the northern wing of the Castle by an old porter who was shutting the last postern. He gives the alarm to the inmates, magnifying it to having seen figures in white, or black, whichever gives the most terrific idea, through the narrow windows of the castle, brandishing them, and beckoning towards them. Horror fills them all, for this gallery of course has the reputation of being haunted, and the doors leading to it cannot, in a *passable*

*romance*, have been opened for less than fifty or sixty years. However, they determine to gather courage and reconnoitre it. Then a housekeeper, who has nearly completed her century, waddles forth with a ponderous bunch of keys at her side ; and after much searching, produces one of the gallery, which with trembling hands she delivers to some stern Manfred—’ ”

“ Oh, no !” said the Countess of Malverton ; “ it is, I think, generally to the beautiful heroine. She with intrepid spirit leads the way. An *irresistible* Matilda, an *heavenly* Angelina, or *divine* Julia.”

“ I believe it is,” replied Mrs. Vigers :—“ and in these supposed haunted apartments is usually discovered an immured parent, doomed by a tyrannical husband (or disappointed suitor) to retribute in eternal solitude crimes never perpetrated ; and fed with bread and water, supplied by mysterious mechanism.”

“ Oh, Grandmamma,” cried Lady Georgiana, “ how can you, who have so long renounced romance-reading, remember so well of what it consists ?”

“ I have not forgotten what it is to be young, and fond of romances too,” said the old lady ; “ though many, many years have elapsed since that period. I even recollect, Georgiana, thinking when I was a girl, that I would write something of the kind ; and that my heroine, for variety, should be plain in her person : or, if she were handsome, have some qualities that would counterbalance her external advantages. For their being beautiful as goddesses and virtuous as angels, is so *harm*neyed, that a young person versed in this sort of reading, and without much opportunity of seeing the world, would be inclined, with many other silly notions, to believe that beauty must always be the accompaniment of amiability, and that a want of the one implied a deficiency of the other. If such a young person happens to be acquainted with some plain yet amiable people, it may make her for a moment suspect the fallacy of what almost every novel and romance has tended to confirm ; but the next she persuades herself they can only have been so in appearance, and that real virtue must be always ‘ by the Graces dressed.’ ”

“And you, Madam,” said the Countess, “wer edetermined if you wrote, not to add to the number of those deluded girls ; and indeed you were right. I wish all novelists would concur in not misleading their readers while they entertain them. That there are writers who, while they delight and fascinate, neither pervert the imagination nor the heart, the many admirable works of a lighter kind which enrich our collection bear testimony.”

“There certainly are,” observed Mrs. Vigers ; “and though I spoke in somewhat of a general way, I by no means intended an indefinite philippic against these sort of books ; for I think there are some extremely well-written, and that when they are so, they are very agreeable relaxations. I would only condemn those which inculcate ideas of the supremacy and necessity for happiness—of beauty, rank, fortune, or any such adventitious and transitory blessings ; considering, as I do, that instilling ideas of the kind, is only calculated to excite discontent in those to whom such blessings are unattainable, and pride in the possessors of them. As for *beauty*, I think its incapability of adding a shade of merit to its possessor, can never be too strongly impressed on the mind, though flattery and folly too frequently refute the axiom. It ought to be considered, as of all gifts of Heaven the one most independent of ourselves, for which we deserve the least commendation, and that to be vain of it, betrays the greatest want of something better. Now, right tempers and dispositions deserve great credit ; for it generally rests with ourselves, either to train and direct our inclinations to what is right, or pervert and mislead them.”

“But, with respect to beauty,” said the Countess, “I am sure you will allow that when it appears but a *secondary* endowment, an emblem of still more lovely dispositions, it is an advantage—a very great one.”

“Certainly,” replied Mrs. Vigers ; “I do not argue against its agreeability, *only* against the possession of it being considered a merit, (of which we have reason to be proud,) or a charm which is to suffice the necessity



of better qualifications. To be pleasing," added Mrs. Vigers, "I think more than desirable, (absolutely necessary,) if we would wish to set off intrinsic worth: for, as Miss Smyth says, 'To be good and disagreeable, is high-treason against virtue.'"

"I think," observed the Countess, looking at her watch, "I may as well employ myself a little; I have been in a most dreadful state of idleness since dinner.—But I believe there are times," added her Ladyship, as she crossed the room, "when one feels inclined to do nothing but think, or perhaps talk."

"Whether those times should be denominated idle, entirely depends, Alicia, on whether the thinking or talking is to some or no purpose. *Your* time is always employed usefully, whichever way your powers are exerted."

"I thank you," replied the complimented lady; "it is well to have some one to reconcile me to myself.—My conscience tells a very different tale."

"What does Lady Malverton's conscience accuse her of?" asked an old gentleman, who just then entered the room.

"Mr. Winters, by all that's wonderful!" exclaimed the Countess of Malverton, assuming a theatrical voice and manner. "Why, my dear Sir, what became of you this week past, that we saw nothing of you, when we are generally in the habit of meeting every day?"

"I leave you to guess, my Lady," returned he.

"Oh, it is a thing quite out of my power!" returned the animated Countess; "perhaps you made an attempt to join the Northern expedition, but found yourself too much behind, and returned."

"Thirty years ago you might have suspected such a thing of me, had you known me," said he, smiling; "but now I enter on no such hazardous undertakings. I am much too sedate for your Ladyship's guess to be true.—Well Mrs. Vigers, what has induced me to play truant?" continued he.

"I am the worst guesser in the world," replied she; "but I am sure, wherever you were, you were acceptable, and doing good."

Mr. Winters bowed. "What says your fair neighbour? Can you guess where I have been, Miss Darcliff?"

"Perhaps attending a friend, or performing *his* duties."

"Miss Darcliff also gives me credit for being well employed; I hope I shall not greatly fall in the estimation of either lady. Well, Lady Georgiana! you are looking so intelligent I imagine you know"

"I assure you," returned her ladyship, "my suppositions are much the same; unless, indeed, you wished to make us feel your absence, Mr. Winters, and stayed away on purpose."

"Lady Georgiana smiles so archly," said he, "that I am convinced she guesses something more than she says."

"Then, to tell you the truth, Sir, I suppose you to have been marrying."

"You have guessed right, my Lady, I was indeed marrying."

"Marrying! Ah, Mr. Winters, you cannot deceive me there," said the Countess; "you were marrying some one else."

"Yes, Madam, one does not usually marry oneself."

"Why, you are quite impenetrable," said her Ladyship; "won't you lay aside enigma and tell us in plain English whom you performed the ceremony for; though I suspect," added she.

"Oh, the wedding comes last in the story, according to custom."

"We must not anticipate then, I suppose," observed Miss Darcliff, "but hear it in its proper place."

"Well, if you are content to do that, I will commence the account of my proceedings. On the very night my son left me (who, by the by, is not returned) I was summoned to administer spiritual comfort to a friend of mine who was thought to be dying, (but who is now, thank God! quite recovered,) and after staying with him a few days at his request, and enjoying the pleasure of seeing him gradually amend, I went on a visit to

our old friends the Mandevilles ; who have been (as I suppose you know) about a fortnight in the country. Indeed, I heard them say you had called twice, and how much they regretted not having been at home."

"It happened very unfortunately on both sides," said Lady Malverton ; "the day we went there some of them were really out, and others denied, as they afterwards wrote to mention, from not being aware, till too late, that it was friends so intimate as ourselves who called. The day they returned the visit, my mother and the girls were out driving, and I was gone to bathe. We called there the other morning but none of them were at home. Some indeed gone, as it afterwards turned out, to pay a visit here, but by a different road : so we missed them. Consequently, by a chapter of accidents, we have seen none of the family, none of the female part I mean to say. Sir William and the young men have rode over several times. But I beg pardon, Mr. Winters, for interrupting you. Now for the marriage."

"Well," said Mr. Winters, "you shall have it in newspaper style. Married, by special license, on Friday last, at Hermitage, in Surrey, the seat of Sir William Mandeville, Bart. Charles Damer, Esq. nephew of the Baronet, and cousin to the Earl of Dorchester, to Caroline Falkner, third daughter of Lucias Falkner, Esq. of Ivy Grove, county of Kent."

"Well," said Lady Malverton, laughing ; "we understood that much by the paper."

"The match," continued Mr. Winters, "had been deferred on account of Sir William's absence from England ; and therefore they made a point to lose no time on his return."

"But what was the necessity of his uncle's being in the country ?" inquired Lady Malverton ; "did he wish to have his opinion of the lady ?"

"Perhaps," said Mr. Winters, "he might wish to pay his uncle that compliment, whether he intended to be influenced by his opinion or not. He might also prefer having his nuptials celebrated at Hermitage."

"I almost wonder the Mandevilles did not make a more dashing business of this wedding, they are so fond of every thing in the way of gayety and show," observed Lady Malverton.

"Why, I am inclined to suspect," said Mr. Winters, "that they did not wish to give publicity to what was very far from a satisfactory event. The young lady was destitute of all those advantages which are passports to favour at Hermitage—family, rank, and fortune."

"Amiability and beauty then, I suppose," said Lady Georgiana, "were the passports to her lover's heart."

"From all I have seen of her," returned Mr. Winters, "I give her credit for possessing the *former* in a great degree, and of the latter she has no inconsiderable share."

"Is there much company stopping at the Castle?" inquired Lady Malverton.

"Indeed there is," said Mr. Winters; "Sir William is as hospitable as ever, and Lady Mandeville as fond of society: but most of the people stopping at the Hermitage at present, consist of those whose votes the Baronet is interested in gaining for his friend Lord Clavers (the son of the Earl of Camelford,) who has, you doubtless know, set up for the county against Sir Henry Ramsay, of Ramsay Park."

"I believe Lord Clavers would be on the Ministerial side," observed Mrs. Vigers; "therefore he has my good wishes, as far as they can serve him. Sir Henry is quite an oppositionist, a man of the people, I know."

"Besides those concerned in the election, they have stopping at the Hermitage, the Earl of Rosmollen, the Honourable Mr. Delamere, Colonel Blomberg, Lord Yalbroke, and a foreign Count of the name of De Meurville, who was with them a great deal when they were abroad."

"I hope his person is as sentimental as his name," observed Lady Georgiana; "it would be a thousand pities to have so pretty a one thrown away upon an un-



interesting man. What is the Count like, Mr. Winters?"

"What *ought* he to be like, Lady Georgiana, to justify his possessing so romantic a title?"

"He *ought*," said her Ladyship, laughing, "to be a fine, sallow, sublime sort of Werter-faced man."

"Oh! I understand," returned Mr. Winters,

'With mustachios that give what we read of so oft,  
The dear Corsair expression—half savage, half soft.'

Well, I believe he is something of the kind—he looks like a hero, like a lover."

"Perhaps he is a lover?" observed the Countess of Malverton.

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Winters; "but I do not think at the Hermitage he has any individual attraction; he appeared to me equally attentive to all the Misses Mandeville."

"How many of them are there at home now?" asked Mrs. Vigers.

"Five," returned Mr. Winters; "which includes all the daughters but Mrs. Balfour, the eldest."

"And did Sir William and Lady Mandeville take all their family abroad?" asked the Countess.

"Oh no," said Mr. Winters; "only two or three of the daughters were taken. Their going abroad, indeed, I believe was more occasioned by the delicate health of one of them, than by the embarrassments of the Baronet's affairs, to which it was generally attributed."

"Is Miss Mandeville at all pretty now?" asked Lady Malverton. "I recollect seeing her," added her Ladyship, without waiting for an answer, "at the first ball she was ever at, when they said she was only sixteen, and she was certainly a beautiful-looking creature; health and joy seemed to light up eyes which too often sparkled with malicious triumph or ill-suppressed envy, and the brilliant colouring of her cheeks was unimpaired by ill health and late hours."

"She is still pretty," said Mr. Winters, "from pos-

possessing regularity of features and gracefulness of figure; but lying on the sofa, hanging over the fire, or going out muffled up—even in July, you would not recognise Madelina, the blooming Madelina, to whom the ‘Morning Post’ used to be so complimentary.”

“Let me see, what is the name of the third daughter?” said Lady Malverton. “She was a brunette, I know, and had been brought up chiefly in France.”

“Charlotte, I think,” observed Lady Georgiana, “she was called?”

“Yes,” said Miss Darcliff, “and then comes Arabella.”

“Ah, poor Arabella!” cried Mrs. Vigers; “she was no favourite, I recollect.”

“No, nor is she now,” said Mr. Winters; “it is reserved for Miss Agnes, her next sister, to be the object of favouritism, to the exclusion of both Arabella and Rhoda, who is the youngest.”

“Agnes was never much at home, I think,” observed the Countess; “she lived with her grandfather and grandmother when a child, and was at school afterwards till she went abroad.”

“The evening before I left the Hermitage,” said Mr. Winters, “as the young people were dancing, and the rest of the company employed with cards and conversation, Lady Mandeville began talking to me about each of her daughters, of some with pride and delight, as being all she could wish—of others with regret and concern, as neither gratifying her fondness as a mother, nor her vanity as a woman. I told her, jokingly, that I was afraid she spoilt Agnes. ‘I fear I do,’ she replied, ‘but I cannot help it, she is such a pretty creature, and so affectionate,’ she added, “that to see her clinging about and caressing me, you would think she had just left her nursery.”

“I owned that this was very charming, and very amiable, that a girl so beautiful, and so admired, possessing feelings so warm and so natural, must render her an object highly beloved! ‘But my dear Lady Mandeville,’ said I, ‘are you certain that you have

equally encouraged regard and affection in those daughters, of whose coldness and indifference you complain? Have you not, think you, been a little influenced by the coral lips of Agnes, and beautiful eyes of Madelin?"

"‘Ah! poor Madelin,’ she said, waving my question; ‘I love her because she was my only companion when Adelaide was married. She was the only one to go out with me, and we were always together. But as for Agnes,’ she continued, with an appealing look; ‘any extraordinary affection I may have for her she has won for herself, there was nothing to prejudice me in her favour, for she was never with me till lately, and I scarcely knew her when I saw her.’”

“You may imagine,” said Mr. Winters, “I had nothing more to say on the subject. Lady Mandeville best knew whether caprice or better motives influenced her in her conduct towards her children.”

The Countess of Malverton appeared thoughtful when Mr. Winters had finished speaking; she was probably thinking, that if he was so penetrating in discovering, and so struck with the unjust partialities of Lady Mandeville, who, from having many daughters, had some little excuse, it not being very likely that they had each equal claims to her regard, how much more must he be struck with the injustice of her own conduct, who, with only two daughters to divide her affections between, allowed them to be almost entirely usurped by the youngest, as it was generally known she did.

Whatever were the sentiments which occupied the mind of the Countess, and however inconsistent such professions were with her own actions, she expressed her full sense of the injustice parents did their children, who, without any cause, except perhaps superiority of external advantages, gave their affections to some in preference to the rest; but at the same time could not help adding (secretly in justification of herself,) that she thought one child's being more affectionate than another certainly entitled him or her to superior regard.

Mr. Winters told her Ladyship in a gentle, yet decided tone, that he was convinced there was scarcely one instance in a thousand in which greater affection on the part of the child would not be found, if the source from which it sprung could be traced, to have been first fostered by some early predilection on that of the parent.

The Countess said nothing more on the subject. And Lady Georgiana exclaimed with vivacity, "Mr. Winters, you must commence a game of chess with me as soon as you have finished your tea, that I may make an attempt to retrieve my lost colours ; I cannot sustain defeat."

"You already feel that you were born to conquer, do you, my lady ?" said Mr. Winters smiling.

"It is woman's destiny," observed Lady Malverton, "to conquer or be conquered ; in every thing she has feelings too warm ever to remain neuter, or preserve a medium."

"With some exceptions," said Mr. Winters, "I do know ladies unblessed with that warmth of feeling, which, however it may, when ill-directed, prove the bane, as may all other advantages, yet under due regulation gives the highest zest to all worldly happiness. Without it the woman may be respectable, but cannot be amiable ; the wife may not improbably command esteem, but certainly cannot warm affection ; and the parent may be venerated, but will not be loved."

"That the absence of a certain share of sensibility," observed Mrs. Vigers, "in a sex of which it is supposed, and, in some degree, ought to be the characteristic, is to be lamented, there can be no doubt ; but do you not think, Mr. Winters, that the woman who only possesses portion enough of it to render her susceptible of enjoyment, and who can sustain misfortunes of any kind with calmness and fortitude ; whom the loss of a husband, beloved child, or cherished friend, has not power to overwhelm ; and whom the possession of such blessings, with every other, still leaves mistress of herself, is the

woman, who, if she does not enjoy most of the goods of this life, is at least sensible to fewest of its ills?"

"Oh, can there be a doubt!" cried the Countess of Malverton, with the enthusiasm of one who knew from experience that feeling may heighten the amiability, but adds little to the happiness of its possessor. "Can there be a doubt that the character you have described would be of all others the most desirable?"

"This philosophical speech, from Lady Malverton, the most feeling of women!" said Mr. Winters: "is she, like her mother, going to be the advocate of dispositions the most opposite to her own, of apathy and cold-hearted selfishness?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Winters," returned Lady Malverton; "I would only detract from feeling to add to usefulness; convinced as I am, that an excess of the former is incompatible with the latter. I speak from experience," continued her Ladyship: "how often have I wished to be more of the philosopher, and less of the woman; never so much, I believe, as when my lord was dangerously ill, and could bear to see none but myself about him; how much more service I should have been of to him could I have controlled my anguish and despair, and ministered with complacency to his wants. When I lost my lovely boy, what did I not suffer! philosophy could not restrain one tear; reason had lost its empire over my heart!"

"But, Lady Malverton, such feelings are so amiable, so calculated to endear you to the objects of them, that none can wish you otherwise," observed Mr. Winters.

"Indeed," Mr. Winters, "you would not say so had you seen me when that darling girl was ill," said Lady Malverton, looking at her daughter: "you would certainly have pronounced the mother a more pitiable object than the child—for that child was apparently about to be removed to a better world; you would have seen in me a useless, wretched creature, unable to administer to the feelings of others, or support my own—a victim to sensibility, as little to be envied as to be proud of."

"In such a situation," observed Mr. Winters, "you

were certainly deprived of the greatest of consolations—that of being their consoler and support. However, Lady Malverton, surrounded with such inestimable friends as you are, and so large a portion of this world's blessings, your feelings must be much oftener exercised in joy than sorrow."

"Thank God! they certainly are," said the Countess; "I have every reason to be grateful to the Bestower of such advantages."

"Well, Lady Georgiana," cried Mr. Winters, rising, "you seem prepared with the honours of war, and presuming on a very speedy conquest, by the late hour you have chosen for commencing."

"Yes," said Lady Georgiana; "I am impatient to retrieve the honours I lost in my last engagement with you; my spirit only rises with defeat."

"May it never have to yield to proud necessity, Lady Georgiana," returned Mr. Winters, as he commenced the game.

"Yield! oh, no, Sir," said her Ladyship, with a look too meaning not to be in earnest; "my heart is too proud to bend, it would sooner break."

"Die of a broken heart, Georgiana!" exclaimed the Countess. "God forbid such a lot should ever be yours!"

"You need not make yourself unhappy, Mamma," cried Lady Georgiana, with the greatest *sang-froid*; "I have not the least fancy for it. I only adopted the Stafford motto," continued she, in a half-laughing, half-contemptuous manner—

"You may break but not bend me."

It has been frequently remarked that trifling everyday circumstances influence the opinions we form of others more than any striking actions. Vanity may incite the latter, but cannot always pervade and actuate the former. It was a combination of apparently trivial circumstances which Mr. Winters had remarked in the conduct and manners of Lady Georgiana Granville

during the time she had been residing at the Abbey with her mother, and even previously when she used to come from London or Granville Castle on a visit, that led him to suspect her temper and dispositions in no way accorded with her outward form—that all was not as heavenly within as it certainly was without. Mr. Winters very much regretted that this should be the case in the daughter and grand-daughter of friends whom he so highly esteemed as he did the Countess of Malverton and Mrs. Vigers: he lamented that the former, whom he was convinced possessed a very superior mind, should indulge such a fatal partiality for her child as to overlook all her faults, and that the latter, instead of fondly palliating them as she usually did, gave not reproof and advice, to which her age and example would have added so much weight and authority. It was neither indolence nor want of penetration to perceive her grand-daughter's faults that prevented Mrs. Vigers from doing so, but a natural leniency of disposition which made her always averse to any thing like reproach or severity; she was one who "hopeth all things," and therefore indulged the idea, that as Georgiana grew older, she would see the necessity of conquering tempers and dispositions which would prove inimical to happiness. In the meantime the fair subject of this digression continued the philosophical game of chess with as much prudence as if she were the most sedate of mortals, while she talked and laughed in a manner that proved her to be the least. Indeed, so great, so versatile were the talents of this young lady that she seemed to acquire by inspiration what most others could only gain with difficulty and pains. It was just ten, and the supper-table laid, when the victorious Georgiana announced her triumph.

"You have no quarter, Mr. Winters," cried her Ladyship; "my queen has carried the day after all."

"Or rather the night," said Mr. Winters.

"And yet," continued her Ladyship, "she was too magnanimous to take advantage of the oversight you made at the beginning."

"And I am sure," said Mr. Winters, "Lady Geor-

giana, more magnanimous still, will not triumph over fallen enemy."

"That would be very unconqueror-like," said Lady Georgiana, laughing.

The family now assembled for prayers; after the conclusion of which, and supper, Mr. Winters wished the ladies good night and returned home.

## CHAPTER II.

"Mothers, 'tis said in days of old,  
Esteem'd their girls more choice than gold;  
Too well a daughter's worth they knew,  
To make her cheap by public view."

*From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.*

"Hermitage, July 18th.

"MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

"You made me promise to write to you as soon as I could after my arrival here, and when you observe the date of this you will allow that I have lost no great time in fulfilling my engagement, taking into consideration, as I trust you will, that I live in the midst of company, and have scarce a moment to myself but when I retire to my room at night. The shortness of our stay in London prevented me from seeing you so often as I could have wished, and circumstanced as I was, entirely from being with you alone, or I should have been anxious to have talked over old times, inquired after favourite companions, and recall to your recollection, though I hope that would have been unnecessary, for I think you do not forget the happy vacation we spent together at my grandmamma's in Northumberland. I trust I shall be more fortunate when next I go to town, or that before then, emancipated from the restraints of school, I shall have the pleasure of seeing my dearest Catharine here;



In the meantime, I must proceed to inform you that we arrived safely to a late dinner on the evening of the day we left town, and found every thing as comfortable and exact as if we had never quitted it. I entertained a perfect recollection of the house, though it was so long since I was an inmate of it; and found the delightful galleries, passages, and staircases, which I had begun to think my imagination had transferred from romance to reality.

“ But I dare say you are all this time more anxious to hear about my cousin’s marriage, which I promised I would give a circumstantial account of when I wrote, and have not hitherto said a word about. It was solemnized a few days ago, and in what was called a private manner, but, in my opinion, bordered much more on a public. The bride herself, who, by the by, was a mere country girl whom Charles took a fancy to, and is as awkward and clumsy as you can imagine, with rather a pretty face, was, for the fortnight preceding, and has been almost ever since, alternately dissolved in tears of agitation, or covered with blushes of confusion. Her bridal dress consisted of white satin and lace, selected by her mother, who, with another of her daughters, was here for a few days at that time. The latter and myself were bride’s maids; neither Madelina or Charlotte would be. The former has taken an unmerciful antipathy to poor Caroline, and spares no opportunity of letting her see it; and Charlotte, if she has not actually done so too, seemed to think it would be paying her too great a compliment. So, out of charity, as Arabella would not be one, I undertook the office; of which I afterward repented, for Caroline, bashful to the last degree, put me forward on every occasion to answer for her, and return thanks for any compliment or congratulation that was made her. Indeed, she had nearly had me married in her place, for Mr. Winters, the clergyman, began the ceremony as we were both standing near Charles and mistook me for the bride.—Dancing succeeded to the marriage, and Colonel Blomberg, a gentleman who is stopping here, talked so much non-

sense to me during the evening that I began to think he wished to have another edition of it, in which he and I should be the actors. Indeed, it put all the gentlemen on the agreeable; there was nothing but looks, sighs, and flirtations: when I say all, I must except the Count de Meurville, whom you tell me you so much admire from what you saw of him when in London with us; for he certainly was not in particular spirits that evening, whatever was the cause. Apropos to him; you must not take it into your head that he is my lover, for it is high treason against the lady to whom he is betrothed, and to whom, on his return to Germany, will be resigned his heart, his honours, his possessions, and himself! If you wish to strike up a courtship between me and any one, you may fix on Lord Yalbroke, for he pays me more attention than he does to any one else, and that, by the by, is not saying much, for he does not trouble any one with his politeness. But however, to make up for his eccentricity, of which he has an immensity, he writes divine poetry, and acts tragedy like Macready or Kean. I must now conclude this long letter, for Arabella announces breakfast. Adieu! my dearest Kate; remember me to Fanny Rivers, and believe me as ever,

“Yours affectionately,

“AGNES MANDEVILLE.”

The Mandevilles, as our readers may rather suspect, were one of those gay dissipated families, keeping open house, dressing, and dashing, making themselves more conspicuous in a county than nobility itself, whose tables are always furnished with the rarities of the season, and whose drawing-rooms are for ever brilliant with lights, music, and company: in which the daughters, among whom some are beauties, some wits, and others neither, are instructed by their worldly minded mother to play off the parts for which they are best fitted; the wits to ensnare by their vivacity, the beauties by their charms, and the plain by their good-humour; and whose manners are of that dubiously agreeable kind, which those who most feel it rather an honour to be intimate with,

them, may pronounce "charming," "delightful," "agreeable," but those who are not under similar impressions, and are a little annoyed at being eclipsed by them in living, scruple not to denominate "overbearing," "insolent," and "assuming."

In dress the Miss Mandevilles frequently affected an elegant rusticity; they would wear bonnets of the coarsest straw, such as they themselves laughingly observed "the children of their charity school would not condescend to," wrap themselves in cloaks of the roughest description, and put on shoes of the thickest kind, aware that all this affected hardness but showed off to greater advantage the delicate forms they affected to invigorate and made more striking the elegance of their appearance in the evening; when decorated with flowers and muslin, they danced like sylphs, or played like seraphs, in the elegant apartments over which they presided, leaving an agreeable doubt on the mind of some bewildered young heir as he retires to his room for the night, whether the Miss Mandevilles, adorned with wild roses in their bonnets in the morning, or glittering with ornaments in the evening, looked most beautiful:—whether Madelin, Agnes, or whoever he had fixed his admiration on, was most calculated to grace a cottage or a court! As it sometimes happens, the person by whose indulgence and liberality all these triumphs for beauty were occasioned and increasing gayeties were kept up, was the only one who neither enjoyed or received any benefit from them, either in gratitude from his daughters, or affection from his wife, namely, the Baronet himself. Devoted to the improvement of his grounds, and interested in the state of his tenantry, Sir William left to his Lady-wife the management of the whole establishment at home; allowed her to fill the house with what company she chose, provided she and her daughters took upon themselves the care of the ladies, and his sons the entertainment of the gentlemen. Possessing such easiness and indolence of temper, Sir William became a cipher in his own house, and was only recognised as its master by sitting at the lower end

of his dinner-table, generally in a heavy contemplative mood, which might have led, on the part of the guests who filled it, to a disagreeable suspicion of being unwelcome to him, had not the perfect *sang froid* of Lady Mandeville, and fascinating gayety of her daughters, seemed to intimate those looks too customary to be regarded.

### CHAPTER III.

"The passions are a numerous crowd,  
Imperious, positive, and loud;  
Curb these licentious sons of strife,  
Hence chiefly rise the storms of life:  
If they grow mutinous and rave,  
They are thy masters, thou their—slave."

MR. WINTERS had judged very right, that the temper of Lady Georgiana Granville bore not the least analogy to her mind and outward form: His opinion was founded on what he had observed at the different times he had been in company with her; had he been constantly in her society, it would have required but little penetration to discover it—her want of it was obvious to all around her, as was the doating fondness of her mother. A circumstance which took place when the family at the Abbey assembled at breakfast, was one among many instances of the pride and passion which characterized this young lady.

The footman brought in with the letters, which always arrived in the morning, a parcel that had come down by the coach, containing shoes and boots, ordered by the Countess for herself and daughter.

"Oh, ~~boots~~ boots!" cried Lady Georgiana, tearing open the parcel. "I hope they are exactly in every respect the kind I desired."

Now our readers must know that Lady Georgiana had set her affections on a pair of boots of a most un-

common description which she had seen worn by a young lady, lately arrived from Paris, and was determined not to be content till she had procured a similar pair. These admired boots were composed of a beautiful geranium-coloured kid, mottled with black, and ornamented with crimson laces, fringes, and tassels : and when instead of them was sent a pair of a different, and as would appear in the eye of many, a prettier colour, accompanied by a very civil note from the maker, mentioning the trouble he had taken to try and procure the kind she wished, but had found it impossible to get the kid, and therefore taking the liberty of sending as substitute a pair of the most fashionable make and colour, her indignation exceeded all bounds ; she declared he was the most lazy, presumptuous, impertinent blockhead that ever was dealt with, not to get what she wished, and to dare send her what she had never ordered. Old-fashioned, hateful things, that looked as if they were made for a "farmer's daughter," that she would sooner go barefoot than wear ; "it was beyond all enduring, all bearing !" in reality it was only beyond her own. She flung the beautiful boots away with an exclamation of passion and contempt. In the meantime the Countess had only expostulated with her daughter in the tender language of pity and commiseration, ill-calculated to have any effect on, or subdue a violent-tempered girl, towards whom the stern voice of command, or more indignant one of justly incensed anger and reproach, was most appropriate. "My sweet child, my own dear Georgiana, do try on the boots ; indeed my pretty girl they will become your little feet. You may be sure the man did all in his power to try and get the sort you wished, but you know how scarce that kind of kid is ; indeed you do, my darling Georgy." Such was the weakly fond language used by the Countess.

"I know nothing," cried the self-willed, passionate darling, "but that he could not have tried, and that I will never wear the boots as long as I live, nor employ him again, and so you may do as you choose with them ; and all you can say for him, or the nasty things, or any

thing else, shall not make me alter my resolution." So saying she burst into an agony of crying !

Astonishing as it may appear, the tears of Georgiana had more effect in softening the Countess, and inclining her to do whatever her daughter wished, than all her impertinence had to irritate her. If they had been those of contrition, it would have been little to be wondered at, but they proceeded from passion no longer able to vent itself in words.

"My own lovely girl," said the Countess, "you shall not fret yourself on account of these boots. I will return them ; I will do anything for you ; but you must not, you shall not cry."

"Look, Georgiana," said Miss Darcliff, "at these pretty shoes, are they not to your taste ? you wished for black satin."

"Nothing that is come is to my taste," replied her Ladyship sharply : "as for those shoes I am sure they are twice too large for my feet, and even if they fitted me, I would send them back."

In the meantime Mrs. Vigers was employed in reading a letter which she had received from her husband, who had been for about a fortnight past in London on some business, and now wrote to express his intention of being with them at dinner that day, accompanied by Mr. Granville, the brother-in-law of the Countess of Malverton ; but the old lady was not so engrossed with the letter as to be regardless of her grand-daughter's conduct, and several times remonstrated with her on its impropriety, for though Mrs. Vigers never punished, she certainly did not encourage, as the Countess did too much, the temper and obstinacy of the young lady ; and perhaps would often have noticed them more severely, but from fear of wounding the feelings of her daughter, whose greatest weakness she knew was her adoration of Georgiana. On this occasion, however, the impertinence of her behaviour was too glaring, and Mrs. Vigers could not help saying, "Well, Alicia, if you do condescend to humour Georgiana any more, I shall not be surprised at any conduct in her."

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Lady Malverton had too much sense not to feel, that in caressing the sullen beauty she was lessening her own dignity and the respect of her child, and she had too much veneration for her mother, and with all her affection for Georgiana, was not so deaf to reason as to continue to do so. When the Countess withdrew her arms from about her daughter, no look of sorrow, no word of penitence, escaped the young lady.

In the fine auburn eyes of Georgiana still trembled the tears of passion and resentment, and on those cheeks, whose colour did not usually exceed that of the Provence rose, now burned the deep glow of the carnation ; while the scarlet lips, which seemed intended only to smile, pouted in proud defiance ! Each fair feature was capable of this metamorphose ! She threw back the thick ringlets that hung over her forehead, and pushing them under her cap, took up the boots that were lying near her, and flung them to the other end of the room.

Even the Countess would put up with no more. "Georgiana," she said in a resolute voice, "if your passions make you so far forget yourself, you shall not forget what is due to us ; leave the room, and let me not see you till in a very different frame of mind. I have indulged you to folly, I know I have, and this is my reward, that you are grown so passionate and overbearing you would be actually hated were you surrounded with friends less disposed to make allowances. You will never, Georgiana, as you mix in the world, find any one willing to put up with your faults as they now are. Go, stubborn girl ! I can be provoked beyond endurance even by you."

Had not her mother made signs to her to remain, Georgiana would have flung out of the room long before she had finished speaking ; for all advice or reproof was thrown away upon this young lady, when pride and passion usurped the place of reason.

"That girl will one day break my heart !" said the Countess, as her daughter left the apartment, "and I shall deserve it. What will her father say, when he returns to England, and sees no change in her temper ? What will he think of me ?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Lady Malverton used frequently and bitterly to lament the pride, the passion, the vanity of her daughter ; but she did not sufficiently trace the source from whence those evils sprung. Want of discipline on the part of her parents, however it might have increased them, could not alone have occasioned them ; for at the period when right or wrong dispositions receive their colourings, the Earl and Countess were mixing too much in the great world to influence their bias. Had they placed about her persons uninterested in flattery, impartial in judgment, Georgiana might have turned out a different girl : early good impressions would have counteracted the effect of future mismanagement ; at least it would have been likely to do so.

As we have mentioned the Countess of Malverton having another and an elder daughter, it may seem surprising that Lady Georgiana should be the centre of interest and regard ; but circumstances had contributed to render her an object of importance.

Immediately subsequent to the marriage of Lord and Lady Malverton, he, then Viscount Dalkeith, was appointed to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, and for three years filled the office of Viceroy in a manner the most satisfactory ; at the end of which time he resigned the honours he had gained in that country, to take possession of those the death of the Earl, his father, had prepared for him in his own.

On the return of the Earl to London, he received a very distinguishing proof of Royal approbation, being visited by the King himself, then Prince Regent, at Malverton House ; who, in terms the most flattering, expressed the high sense he entertained of the excellency of his administration in Ireland, in a country where it was, he knew, peculiarly difficult to maintain steady authority and unprejudiced judgment. That he had happily succeeded in doing so, the esteem and affection he had gained in that country, the fame which had spread to his own, bore ample testimony.

The Prince's wish to reward the Earl for such ser-



vices was, he politely declared, only equalled by his inability to do so in an adequate manner; but if Lord Malverton could himself point out any situation that he would think worthy of accepting, and in the power of His Highness to grant, it should be his.

What was there that the heart of a subject, thus flattered and encouraged, would not have dictated. That of the Earl prompted every sentiment of gratitude, loyalty, and love, even more eloquently than his words expressed them, but he could not be prevailed on to name a recompense for services to which he laid no claim, and therefore the Prince himself nominated him to a high office in the state. During the residence of the Earl and Countess Malverton in Ireland, they had had two children: the eldest a girl, who received the name of Alicia; the other a boy, who survived his birth but a few months. And a short time after the return of her Ladyship to England, she was confined of her third child, to whom the Prince and two of his Royal sisters signified their intention of standing sponsors. On this intimation being given, every thing was prepared that could give splendour and *eclat* to the christening of the distinguished infant: and on the eighteenth of January, in a magnificent apartment hung with crimson, lighted with a thousand tapers, festooned with laurel, carpeted with velvet, the child supported in the arms of a Princess, in presence of the first Peers and Peeresses of Britain, received the names of Georgiana Augusta Frederica; and had renounced for her by Royal lips the pomps and vanities of this world.

Ushered into life, if we may be allowed the term, under such splendid auspices, Lady Georgiana heard from her cradle nothing but the language of adulation and fondness; was told that she was a beauty, an heiress, an angel, and every thing about her confirmed the flattering tale.

In the persons selected by the Earl and Countess to educate their daughters, they thought they had chosen those best qualified for the purpose; and the improvement of Lady Alicia, and excellency of her dispositions,

confirmed the idea ; but the truth was that this young lady had profited by the advice and instruction of an amiable and excellent governess, who had implanted good dispositions in her mind, at a time when her sister was considered too young—too delicate—but was in reality too spoiled, to share the advantage ; and when the period arrived at which it was thought proper for Lady Georgiana to receive instruction with her sister, this invaluable preceptor was no more. The person who supplied her place was highly recommended to Lord and Lady Malverton, and principally to her care did they intrust the future education of their daughters. Lady Alicia, the foundation of whose character had been laid by previous good instructions, continued every day to improve in mind and disposition, though the lady under whose care she now was, either from indolence, or considering them a point of little moment, paid no attention to the latter. Lady Georgiana, from not having known till this period any masters but her will, was impatient of control, high-spirited, and commanding ; but at the same time ambitious of improvement, indefatigable in exertion, and highly-gifted by nature ; in short, the last girl in the world to be put under the tuition of a person whom indolence deterred from correction.—The Earl and Countess, from mixing much in the great world, had little time to attend to their children, and when they did, seeing them improved in every external accomplishment, they fondly flattered themselves their hearts and dispositions were equally cultivating, though they could not watch their developement. They sometimes noticed, certainly with scorn, the passionate temper of their youngest daughter ; but still trusted, that education, precept, and example, were counteracting, what they were in reality rather abetting ; and that Georgiana, when convinced of its necessity, would improve in temper as much as she did in every thing else. In this hope, however, they were disappointed. *Fifteen* found Lady Georgiana an angel, indeed, in person, and highly accomplished in mind and manners, but with a temper which was at times ungovernable. It was about

this period that the Earl of Malverton, finding his pecuniary circumstances much embarrassed by the expensive course of life which the public situations he had for many years occupied led him into, considered it necessary to accept the Governorship of India, which was offered him; where, though his expenses might be greater, his income would be proportionate: and the Countess with her daughters had determined to accompany him, when Lady Georgiana, whose health had been for some time past declining, was pronounced on the verge of a rapid consumption, and the air of Devonshire was recommended for her. Thither, therefore, Lady Malverton went on the departure of her husband; not very sanguine indeed in her hopes, for Devonshire was merely advised by the physicians as a resort, during the interim that must elapse before final arrangement could be made for her going to Italy or Madeira. However, to the inexpressible joy of her mother, the salubrious air of Devonshire effected that change in the health of Georgiana which it had been thought a foreign climate alone could do; and Lady Malverton, after a six months residence there, returned to London, with her darling daughter restored to health, animation, and beauty.— Where to fix her future residence was now the doubt which occupied the mind of the Countess: to remain at Malverton House with her mother and brother-in-law she would not think of, and to reside at Granville Castle would oblige her to maintain an establishment larger than during the absence of her husband would be agreeable. While these ideas perplexed the mind of her Ladyship, she received a letter from her parents, insisting on her coming down to Surry with her daughters, and remaining with them during Lord Malverton's absence abroad. The offer was too tempting to be rejected, and after some pecuniary preliminaries on the part of the Countess, which their generosity made them averse to complying with, but her delicacy would not concede, Lady Malverton, leaving her eldest daughter Alicia, who was of an age to mix in company, under the care of the Countess Dowager in London, went to Surry with Lady Georgiana.

## CHAPTER IV.

"Pleasure is all the reigning theme,  
The noon-day thought, the midnight dream ;  
Yet take it for a sacred truth,  
That pleasure is the bane of youth."

ON the morning of that unfortunate day which we fear lost Lady Georgiana all credit for amiability with our readers ; on which she displayed tempers that would make a father tremble to call her his child, or a lover his mistress ; on the morning of that day, the Countess of Malverton, Mrs Vigers, and Miss Darcliff, set out to call at Hermitage, the seat of Sir William and Lady Mandeville. The weather was remarkably fine, and the roads being good, the distance from Abbeville, which was three miles, seemed but short. The scenery of the Baronet's estate struck them as appearing to greater advantage than it had done before. It was now, indeed, the midst of summer, and every thing in the highest state of perfection. Under the luxuriant oaks of the Park the deer alternately ranged and reposed, while throughout the green woods pleasingly re-echoed the warbling of birds, the whistling of peasantry, the roar of waterfalls ; and along the river which interspersed the domain, laburnums hung their showy branches, willows drooped their graceful boughs, and acacias waved their yellow hair. On one side of the estate the eye was met by a cheerful group of orchards, cottages, and gardens ; on another by richly planted hills, and browsing sheep ; and again, by ivy-covered ruins, beyond which the village church peeped through ash-trees and tall poplars.

"The sight of this place," said Mrs. Vigers, as they drove up the avenue, or rather labyrinth, "tempts one to exclaim, as a friend of Dr. Johnson's did of the seat

of Lord Scarsdale ; ' Surely the proprietor of all this must be happy ! ' "

" If you did," observed the Countess, assuming mock gravity, " I should reply in the words of his philosophical friend, ' All this excludes but one evil, poverty.' "

" Well, then, I will not venture," said Mrs. Vigers ; " I was not aware before of being in company with a philosopher."

" Nor are you," cried her Ladyship, instantly laughing, and changing her tone. " I am a woman ; and would not change that title, and the privileges annexed to it, for all the philosophy in the universe."

" How beautiful those peacocks look," remarked Miss Darcliff, pointing to some which were pacing on the outside of the glass-houses.

" Yes, their plumage looks very splendid," said Mrs. Vigers ; regarding the gaudy creatures, who displayed their rich tails to the sun.

" There is a something about Hermitage," observed the Countess, thoughtfully, " which I always very much admired ; and I recollect Lord Malverton used too : it presents so many contrasts in its scenery. *Here* the dark umbrageous shades of ancient taste ; *there* the light and elegant improvements of modern days."

" It certainly presents a happy combination," replied Mrs. Vigers ; " but here comes its master. I hope we see you well, Sir William," said Mrs. Vigers, as the Baronet approached, and she pulled the check-string of the carriage.

" Perfectly, I thank you," returned he : " to judge from your looks, and those of your companions, it would be unnecessary to make a similar inquiry. I presume," continued he, " you are going on to see the ladies."

" Yes," returned the Countess, " we hope to find them all well and at home. In driving up here we have been admiring the beautiful appearance of your estate, Sir William ; I think I never saw it look so lovely !"

" Why, yes," returned the good-natured, unaffected Baronet ; " the works of Nature look very well, and I

hope you will by and by come with me and see those of Art."

"It will afford me great pleasure," said Lady Malverton; "I have not forgot your grapery, your conservatory, or, indeed, anything connected with the Hermitage."

"You are very kind, Countess," replied Sir William; "but in the meantime I must not be so selfish as to detain you any longer from the ladies." So saying, the Baronet left them, and the carriage drove on.

"A good-natured man, poor Sir William is," observed Mrs. Vigers.

"Yes," returned the Countess, "but he never appears, I think, in very good spirits. I should be inclined to suspect he was not very happy in his own family. Lady Mandeville is very little, at least she used to be, the kind of woman to consult the comforts, or regard the wishes of a husband."

"No," said Mrs. Vigers, "Lady Mandeville's element is not domestic life: of fireside enjoyments she can form no idea; the height of her ambition is for herself, her daughters, her house, and table, always to appear to the greatest advantage."

"As for the girls," observed the Countess of Malverton, who with many good qualities, was frequently a little severe; "every one knows they vote their father quite a bore, except when furnishing them with means to pursue their amusements: and I do not think," added her Ladyship, "that the sons appear at all attached to him."

The avenue—or, as we have said before, more properly labyrinth—after winding for about three-quarters of a mile through plantations and thickets, which just left room for a carriage to pass, terminated by gentle declivities in a valley, darkened by the boughs of trees hanging over surrounding cliffs. In this valley or recess, was situated the Hermitage, whose turrets, for it was built like a castle, were scarcely visible till closely approached: this retreat seemed, indeed, like another

world, a cool and delightful contrast to the sunshiny and gaudy scenery which surrounded it.

"I always fancy myself approaching some foreign monastery, or hermit-like abode," said Miss Darcliff, as the carriage descended a gloomy terrace, quite overshadowed by trees which swept the top of it.

"Yes," replied Lady Malverton, "it must be owned this approach is more in character with the name of the place than its inhabitants: nobody would believe it led to the residence of the gay, dashing Miss Mandevilles."

"As far as regard the owners," observed Mrs. Vigers, "the name Hermitage is about as appropriate as when applied to the palace of the Empress Catharine of Russia."

"Some of them have been riding, I presume," said the Countess—"I see their horses leading from the door. They came, I suppose, some other way, or we should have fallen in with them," added her Ladyship, as they stopped at the ivied porch, which was the entrance of the Castle, where were standing two or three footmen. "Is Lady Mandeville at home?" asked Mrs. Vigers, as one of them came forward.

"Yes, Ma'am," was the reply; and just then, Mr. Damer the nephew, and Mr. Sidney Mandeville, the son of the Baronet came forward.

"I am glad to see you once more at Hermitage, ladies," said the latter, as the carriage-door was opened, and he and his cousin went forward to hand them out.

"Not more glad than we are to find ourselves here," said Mrs. Vigers.

"I was beginning to despair of ever having the pleasure of seeing you here again," continued he.

"Oh, you gave yourself soon up to despair, Mr. Mandeville," said Lady Malverton, "considering you have only been a fortnight in the country, and during that time we called twice, though you were out."

"A fortnight is an age," returned he.

"In your vocabulary alone, I believe," said her Ladyship.

"But you have not brought Lady Georgiana after all; how comes that, my Lady?"

Lady Malverton made some excuse for her daughter.

"I do not know what the girls will say, do you, Sidney?" said Mr. Damer.

"Indeed I do," replied he; "they will be very angry; for I was telling them, Lady Malverton, of the beautiful girl who ran to call some one to take my horse, the day I rode to Abbeville, and they are dying to see her. Your charming daughter did not at first recollect me; I had been scorching under tropical suns since she saw me. But I assure you," concluded he, as he began, "my sisters will never forgive you; however, here they and my mother are, come to speak for themselves."

And now Lady Mandeville, dressed in a handsome blue-coloured pelisse and silk bonnet, from which drooped flowers and ribands, met them on the stairs: she was followed by her daughter Charlotte, and her niece, Mrs. Damer.

In the course of a minute, numerous expressions of delight and regret fell from the lips of each lady; delight at seeing them again, regret that Lady Georgiana did not accompany them; joy at their appearing so well, sorrow that they did not come earlier; most of which exclamations, and many others, were repaid with interest on the other side.

"I am sure no one can doubt foreign air has agreed with you, Lady Mandeville," said the Countess: "I never saw you, which is saying a great deal, look so well in my life, and Charlotte's more blooming than ever. I believe I had not the honour," her Ladyship was commencing, turning to Mrs. Damer, when Lady Mandeville interrupted her.

"You remind me of my omission," she said, "I had forgotten to introduce Caroline to you—allow me to do it now."

Mrs. Damer curtsied and smiled with the good-humoured air of one solicitous for acquaintance.

"But we were talking of looks, Countess," said Lady Mandeville; "and apropos to them, we should all look



more comfortable were we to adjourn to the eating-room, instead of standing here on the stairs."

So saying, she led the way across a corridor through the billiard-room, and opening the door of an apartment which appeared filled with company, looked in, and asked "Whether Madelin was there."

"No," was the reply from a lady inside; "she went to the library."

"Well, then, I think we may as well go there too," said Lady Mandeville, shutting the door; "for poor Madelin, I know, is so anxious to see you, and she has no idea you are here now. I was sitting in the room we have just left," continued her Ladyship, addressing Mrs. Vigers and the Countess, "when I heard a carriage, and though I could not see, from the thickness of the trees about the windows, whose it was, the moment I heard the voices I knew it must be yours; but before I could tell Madelin so, she had run out of the room, thinking it was Mrs. and the Miss Stannards, whom she hates." As they were passing through a green-house, which was one entrance to the library, Charlotte Mandeville ran forward, and opening the door of the latter, announced, "Mrs. and Miss Stannard and young Mr. Stannard, and Mr. Joseph Stannard," she provokingly added, knowing these two young men were the particular objects of her sister's aversion.

"Oh, what a cruel joke on poor Madelin," said Lady Mandeville, half laughing, as she and the rest stopped for a moment to hear what effect it would have on the fair one. "I will tell you, some day or other," softly whispered her Ladyship to the party that surrounded her, "what makes Madelin hate the Stannards so."

In the meantime, though they heard no noise, it seemed Miss Mandeville was evidently going to make her escape, for Charlotte exclaimed in a voice the most provokingly loud, "You cannot run away, Madelin, they are just at the door." The party without considering this a signal to enter, did so, getting a look from Charlotte not to speak a word. Miss Mandeville, who had just had time to reseal herself on the sofa, and snatch

up a book, did not deign to raise her eyes as they entered, but made a slight inclination of her head. Attired in a morning dress of the most elegant make and materials, with a shawl of the richest silk, and white leghorn bonnet, from which drooped bunches of lilac, and a splendid veil, Miss Mandeville reclined on her seat with the nonchalance and sullen silence of a haughty princess. Near this young lady sat the Count de Meurville, a dark, interesting-looking young man, who appeared at a loss to know whether he was to speak, be introduced to them, or what to do. The Count had the air of one who felt a little annoyed at being placed in such a predicament, though at the same time a smile played round his mouth.

A fat, comical-looking woman, who was the French governess of the youngest daughter, was seated in an arm-chair at one end of the room, and suspended the settling of some flowers she had hitherto been arranging in a China basin, to look on at this mute scene, which apparently gave her great inclination to laugh. At a window was seated a young man, whose appearance, quite reserved and pensive, might incline a person to take him either for an humble cousin, or a tutor, or chaplain, or perhaps each, but not for a person privileged or inclined to break by a loud laugh the spell which hung over the company, and which had excited his attention enough to induce him to lay down the book he had been perusing, and gaze at each party alternately.

This dumb scene lasted for a minute or two: Miss Mandeville would almost have given worlds, had she had them, to have accounted for the taciturnity of people whose loquaciousness generally disgusted her, without raising her eyes. The Count de Meurville whispered to her to "say something," but drawing her hand before her face, she gave him a sidelong glance, which seemed to say "do you." How much longer this agreeable silence might have continued is doubtful, had Miss Mandeville been able to restrain her curiosity, and the rest their risibility, but they were alike incapable of doing it. Turning round her head in as queen-like a

manner as she could, Miss Mandeville looked at Madame, who was leaning back on her chair convulsed with laughter, a bunch of tulips in one hand, and a handkerchief in the other; her merriment did not greatly surprise the young lady, for she knew her to be easily amused; but when her eyes alighted on Mr. Percy, and saw him on the broad grin, she really began to think there must be something very wonderful, for this gentleman was quite unused to the laughing mood, and her suspicions were confirmed by a loud laugh from Charlotte; it was then, indeed, that Madeline turned her eyes on the visitors, and surprised, delighted, recognised in them the Countess of Malverton, Mrs. Vigers and Miss Darcliff. "Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte!" was her first exclamation, "what could induce you to deceive me so, to make me believe I had before me the persons I most hate! Instead of those, she continued shaking hands with her friends, "whom I most highly love and esteem!"

"It is only an agreeable surprise," returned Charlotte, with the greatest vivacity.

"But that I see you," said Miss Mandeville, sitting down by the Countess, "I should almost think it too agreeable to be true. But tell me, how is Mrs. Vigers, and how is Lord Malverton, and Alicia, and Georgiana, and all my friends whom I have not seen for so long a time, but have never forgotten," continued the young lady, who was not the least abashed by the display of temper, which a wrong supposition had led her into.

Lady Malverton replied to all her inquiries, and told her the objects of them would be highly gratified when they heard that they retained so large a share of her remembrance.

Charlotte Mandeville now led over the Count de Meurville, and introduced him to Mrs. Vigers and the Countess. "This gentleman is dreadfully afraid, Lady Malverton," said she, "that you take him to be as silly as I am; but in honour I must assure you, if it had descended on him alone, the charm of that agreeable embarrassment would have been dissolved at the be-

ginning, for he instantly knew, though he had never seen you, that neither your Ladyship, nor your companions, could be the persons I was making my sister believe, and he was wanting me to undeceive her."

Lady Malverton smiled and said, "It was impossible for the Count de Meurville to be implicated in any circumstances in which he could appear to disadvantage;" and her Ladyship, in terms the most flattering, expressed the pleasure she felt in being introduced to one whom she had heard spoken of so frequently and so highly.

The Count de Meurville bowed, and presently retired to a window, as if not wishing to interfere with the conversation of those who were so much older acquaintances.

In the meantime, Lady Mandeville having laughed unmercifully at Madelin's dignity, for so she denominated her daughter's pride, sat down to talk to Mrs. Vigers. In conversation at all times her Ladyship had that agreeability of manner, which would lead those whom she addressed to suppose they were the objects of all others most interesting to her; and in conversing with Mrs. Vigers, she did not, as some ladies would think themselves privileged to do, after a two years' residence abroad, affect to forget or despise every thing English, talk only of the society, fashions, and amusements of Paris; the paintings, sculpture, and climate of Italy; constantly refer to the Duke of this, and the Prince of that; or overflow with anecdotes of what she said to the Duchess, and what the Duchess said to her. No; to judge from Lady Mandeville's conversation with Mrs. Vigers, it might have been supposed she was interested only in what related to the Abbey and its inhabitants. Nothing concerning any individual connected with it escaped her memory. Only once did she allude to her foreign tour, and that was in saying how much two years absence from it enhanced the pleasure she felt in being again at home. This manner, so flattering, so fascinating, was unfortunately too universal with Lady Mandeville to allow the idea of its being sincere. But whether it was, or only the acmé of politeness, it was

certainly more agreeable than the chilling coldness and repulsive bluntness, which, dignified by the name of fashionable address, we so frequently meet with. High-born inanity or pride must surely have given ton to manners which may be an easy resort for the one, and excellent cloak for the other, but are at war with all good-breeding.

While Lady Mandeville was conversing with Mrs. Vigers, her daughters with the Countess, and Mrs. Damer with Miss Darcliff, to whom she seemed to have taken a fancy, the door opened, and Mr. Clermont Mandeville, the youngest son of Sir William, entered.

"Well, Clermont," said his mother, after the young man had paid his respects to the company, "where have you been this morning? Did you ride over to West-Olmsby?" alluding to the place where his living was situated.

"Yes," replied the young divine, rolling his large sunny eyes around the room; "and saw my poor sag Lewson, who gave me a long account of all the old women and children in the parish. Poor fellow! I told him I was afraid he would exhaust himself in effecting the reformation of West-Olmsby; and to comfort him a little, held out the idea of its being probable he might be indulged in an hour's more sleep next Sunday, as I entertained an intention of coming over myself to edify the good people with a sermon, the result of many months' meditation."

"You lazy fellow, I have not common patience with you," said his sister Madelina, playfully shaking him by the shoulder. "Have you, Clifford?" she added with and appealing look at her cousin.

"I have given up Clermont's reform," answered the Count de Meurville, throwing aside his book, and advancing towards them; "I know I shoudn't like to be his curate."

"No; it's not an enviable situation," returned Clermont, laughing; "and I do pity that wretched being Lewson amazingly; but as for my having all the busi-

ness on my own hands, or half of it, 'tis an utter impossibility."

"Oh, Lewson is very happy! depend upon it," said the Count de Meurville, ironically. "He is the little Bishop of West-Olmsby."

"Apropos to the little Bishop," cried Clermont; "he is so scandalously poor he can never turn me out any thing to eat; and after my ride I am always ravenous."

"There is nothing like riding to give an appetite," observed Mr. Percy breaking silence for the first time, as he closed his folio.

"Nothing, upon my honour," returned Clermont. "I do think I could have eaten my groom, Stoick himself, yesterday, I was so voracious; and by my troth, he would not have been a very dainty morsel; would he, Clifford?"

"I should rather imagine not," replied the Count de Meurville.

"But talking of eating," continued Clermont, "I must go in pursuit of some. Will you come with me, De Meurville? I know Rosmullen was wanting to speak to you a few minutes ago, and he went into the saloon when he came in."

"*De tout mon cœur*," replied the Count, following Mr. Mandeville to the door; but then stopping for a moment, and turning to Miss Mandeville, he said, "Will you fulfil your promise, Madelina, and take a drive with me in the curricule, by and by?"

"Oh, certainly," she replied; "it is just three now; if you will order your grays at half-past four, for I will be ready then, I am sure Lady Malverton will excuse me."

"My dear Miss Mandeville," said the Countess, laughing, "do you reckon on having a lease of us till then?"

"Oh, certainly!" returned she, laying her hands on those of the Countess in her own peculiarly caressing manner.

"Now I am afraid," said Mrs. Vigers, who had partly

overheard what was saying, "that we are preventing your driving or walking this beautiful morning."

"Oh, not in the least," interrupted both Lady Mandeville and her daughters; "we are always in about this time for luncheon, and talking of it, we have made a great omission in not ordering some here," continued Lady Mandeville, ringing the bell. "We are so late in our hours," her Ladyship said, addressing Mrs. Vigers.

"I assure you we scarcely ever dine before eight, even in summer, nor have done breakfast entirely till a good deal past one."

"You have so many gentlemen usually at your house," observed Mrs. Vigers; "and they always contribute to make hours uncertain."

"Indeed they do, Mrs. Vigers," said Miss Mandeville; "those lords and masters of the Creation think of little but their own convenience."

"Instead of that," added Charlotte, laughing, "of the lovely sex whom they were born to please."

"I wonder we do not see something of the other girls," said Lady Mandeville, as the door was opened, and the footman brought in refreshments. "I wish, Berry," her Ladyship continued, addressing the servant, "you would go and look for the young ladies, and tell them to come to the library."

As Lady Mandeville said this, Sir William came into the room. "Why, ladies," cried the Baronet, "have all the gentlemen deserted you?"

"We have rather deserted or discouraged them," said Lady Mandeville, "by taking no notice of them, we had so much to say to one another."

"Then, perhaps, I am an intruder," said Sir William.

"Indeed," cried Miss Mandeville, in a half-bitter, half-jesting tone, "I was just going to ask, papa, who authorized your entrance here with your farming boots."

"I hope these ladies will excuse me," said Sir William, good-humouredly; "they know me of old to be but an English farmer."

"The most respectable of characters," observed each lady.

"I came to claim your promise, Lady Malverton," continued the Baronet, "of coming out to look at some of my improvements in the glass-house way."

"My goodness! Sir William," said his wife, with as much suavity as she could assume to conceal her real displeasure; "you seem to think every one is as much interested in your improvements and plans as you are yourself. Why, Lady Malverton has green-houses and hot-houses before her eyes every day; the only difference she would see between our's and those of Abbeville would be, the former being surrounded with brick and mortar, and the latter, I make no doubt, in capital repair."

It was in vain that the Countess, half-rising from her seat to go, declared the pleasure it would give her, and the interest she took in every thing of that kind. Lady Mandeville would not hear of her going out, "broiling in the sun," as she expressed it; though the heat was in reality far from intense.

"I dare say, papa," said his daughter Charlotte, "that Lady Malverton would far rather have a specimen of the contents of the hot-house than go out to look at the glass work of it."

Before the Countess could say any thing the door opened, and Agnes Mandeville, followed by her sister Rhoda, and a gentleman, whose wild look and extraordinary attire pronounced him to be Lord Yalbroke, entered the library.

Agnes, dressed like Miss Mandeville, and with some beautiful flowers in one hand, was in person like her sister; but at that happy age, when the girl is just expanding into woman, more radiant, more elastic, more lovely! with eyes, that justifying every vanity, seemed to entertain no such feeling; and looks that, betokening every sweetness, seemed to defy every censure; there was a character of timidity and yet confidence, of wildness and yet dignity about her the most striking, and, combined with the angelic softness of her manner, the most enchanting that can be imagined. She spoke, and the same lovely diffidence pervaded her address;



she listened, and the same bewitching wiliness played about her features. Altogether, it was apparent that nature and education were not quite unanimous in their impulses; and that the dignity, reserve, and correctness, inculcated by the latter, were frequently at variance with the vivacity, playfulness, and thoughtlessness she received from the former.

Her sister Rhoda, destitute of the beauty, had not either the graces that distinguished Agnes; but there was in her countenance a sullen seriousness which, while it excited observation, forbade cordiality, and gave her the appearance of one forced into scenes in which she took no interest, and compelled into collisions only to appear to disadvantage, which was in reality the case: for Lady Mandeville, endeavouring only at the advancement of those of her children whom nature had rendered lovely and attractive, though she intended that all should be ultimately benefitted by it, adopted as one method, that of keeping them in constant contrast with those to whom Nature had been less beneficent; and whether in the persons of their own sisters, or in that of other people, the beautiful Miss Mandevilles were notoriously observed to be never long in contact with any but the plain, the uninteresting, and the repelling. In the meantime Lord Yalbroke, after having been introduced to the visitors, retired to a distant part of the room, where standing with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed upwards, he seemed either taking its dimensions, calculating the expense of its hangings, or else solving some mathematical problem.

The library, in which all the party we have described were assembled, was in an octagon shape, containing two windows and two doors: the light proceeding from the former was agreeably softened by Venetian blinds, muslin shades, and silk draperies, and the latter being like the rest of the wall, covered with books, maps, or pictures, could not be perceived when shut. On one table, covered with a scarlet cloth, was assembled every convenience for writing; on another of a similar description, only spread with purple, lay drawings of vari-

ous kinds, while magnificent arm-chairs, couches, lamps, vases, globes, &c., were to be seen in every direction, and the fragrance proceeding from the green-house adjoining made each part of the room delightful. After the visitors had taken some refreshment, Sir William once more ventured to urge his plan of walking to the gardens, which, as Lady Malverton had made a sort of promise before to comply with, she considered herself unable to evade. Lady Mandeville raised no more objections; and the Countess, with some of the rest of the party, proceeded, her Ladyship walking first with Sir William and Agnes, Sidney Mandeville and Sophia Darcliff nearly close behind them. During their walk to the garden, Agnes was endeavouring to induce Lady Malverton to join them in a party they intended forming in a few days, to visit some grounds a few miles off. Whilst she was urging her request, and Lady Malverton deliberating, they were joined by the Count de Meurville.

"Clifford," said Agnes, looking up at him, "what is the name of Colonel Blomberg's place which we are to go and see next week?"

"Glen-morning, or Mount-morning, or something of that kind, I think," returned the Count de Meurville.

"It is Mount-morning," observed the Baronet, who had stepped aside to speak to his steward, and again joined them.

"Well, to Mount-morning you must come with us, Lady Malverton," said Agnes.

"Oh, indeed you must," observed the Count de Meurville, "if you were never there, for the place is worth going to see."

"The company of those whom I should go with would be a sufficient inducement to me," said the Countess.

"We intend to make it a sort of gipsy party," said Agnes; "to go in our morning dresses, with large bonnets, to defend us from the sun, and take our dinner in a wood, or wilderness, or some such place, but not off mahogany tables."

"I suppose," said the Baronet, "you would like the party to dine by the side of a murmuring stream."

"Oh, no, Sir," returned Agnes, playfully, "we will have no murmuring streams in the environs, or we shall have to answer for some of the company getting an attack of the rheumatism."

"Miss Mandeville is right; is she not, Lady Malverton?" said the Count de Meurville, with an arch smile, "to provide against what she is so likely to suffer by herself?"

"I was thinking so," returned the Countess.

"Oh, if I were only to think of myself," observed Agnes, laughing, as she understood their inuendo; "I would dine with equal pleasure on the banks of a river, or borders of a forest, on the shore of the sea, or summit of the mountain, and you know that," said she, looking up at the Count de Meurville, "for we have often dined in such places together."

"Oh yes," returned the Count de Meurville, "I can bear testimony to having dined in company with you on the banks of the Arno, and in the forests of Savoy, on the shores of the Adriatic, and ascent of the Alps."

As he spoke they entered the garden in which seemed assembled all that could enchant the eye and exhilarate the senses. The walls streamed with the richest fruits, the terrace walks, in defiance of the care of the gardener, were swept by branches of drooping rose-bushes, and splendid carnations and pinks, while the sunny banks were alternately covered with lilies of the valley, strawberries, and tulips; and mignonette and geranium, growing almost wild from the richness of the soil, seemed to waft the balsamic gales of Asia to the gardens of the Hermitage.

"Miss Mandeville, you look like Eve in Paradise," said the Countess of Malverton to Agnes, as the latter, to procure her Ladyship some fine currants, had run up one of the beds, and in trying to pull the fruit encompassed herself in a thicket of roses.

"And never did Eve feel more pleasure in doing the honours of her garden to the angel Raphael, than I in

doing those of mine to you," replied Agnes, as she presented some white currants to Lady Malverton.

Sir William, who in the mean time had gone into the hot-house to pull some of his finest peaches and nectarines, now approached Lady Malverton, and requested her to take some of them, which she did, declaring she had never seen any of such size and beauty; and the Baronet insisted, that with the addition of some grapes and apricots, the basket should be put into her carriage.

They now went into her green house, and were presently joined by Lady Mandeville, Mrs. Vigers, and Charlotte.

"What became of you all?" inquired Sir William, as they entered, apparently amused by some incident in their walk.

"Did you lose yourself in your own labyrinth, Lady Mandeville?" said the Count de Meurville.

"Indeed I did," replied her Ladyship; "I was so engaged in talking to Mrs. Vigers, that we took a wrong path, and have been going backwards and forwards to get into the right walk to the garden. Indeed, Sir William," concluded her Ladyship, "you should make some more direct way to the garden; as it is, it would require a geographical treatise on the subject."

"Perhaps, Lady Mandeville," said the Count de Meurville, "Sir William has some fair Rosamond concealed in these plantations.

"Perhaps so," returned her Ladyship, "but I have no clue of silk to guide me to her habitation."

"Those cross-walks and thickets were my mother's taste," observed Sir William.

"Just worthy of a lady's taste," said Sidney; "they like cross-purposes and double entendre in every thing."

"How can you say such a thing, Sidney?" exclaimed Agnes.

"Now confess, my charming sister," continued he, "that you would rather a gentleman looked at you, in a manner that led you to think he thought you a divinity, than told you in plain English you were one."

"I should not be so vain as to believe either his looks or words," replied Agnes: and as she spoke she darted an angel-glance at Clifford.

After having passed a considerable time in admiring the beauties of nature and the aids of art; in seeing foreign and domestic plants; they all, at the request of the visitors, who were in vain urged to stay and dine, returned to the Castle, on the terrace before which now stood an elegant curricule and beautiful grays. Miss Mandeville advanced to meet the party as they approached the house; her graceful morning dress exchanged for a pelisse, of (if possible) more becoming form and texture. About her neck and face, which were peculiarly delicate, she always wore a profusion of white lace, knowing from frequent study that it was becoming to her.

"Miss Mandeville, you look very elegant," said Mr. Fraser, a blunt, good-natured man who now joined them, and seemed *un ami de famille*—"but should you look equally comfortable were a shower of rain to come on?"

"Oh, indeed I should, Sir," replied Miss Mandeville, in her usual sprightly manner: "I never forget to provide for comfort; and regard it more than elegance, when they cannot be combined. In the first place there is a great deal of warmth in this pelisse, indeed many would laugh at me for putting it on in July, but I am always *chilly*"—concluded she with an affected shiver, "and then—"

"That fragile lilac, my dear Miss Mandeville," interrupted he, "would cut but a poor figure in a shower of hail."

"I do not intend to expose it to the trial," returned Miss Mandeville; "look at that thick cloak," continued she, pointing to a fine gray cloth, lined throughout with pink Persian, and bordered with ermine, which one of the grooms was holding, "and this crimson shawl," alluding to one she held on her arm; "and besides these there is my cousin's blue mantle, lined throughout with sable, in the curricule."

"Well," returned Mr. Fraser, "as this is a fine July day, and no chance of a shower, I believe you are tolerably well provided."

"*Tolerably* well, Mr. Fraser," repeated Miss Mandeville; "why I consider myself fit for a Russian campaign."

"I do think *men* are the most inconsistent beings with regard to women's attire!" said Lady Mandeville to the Countess; "sometimes they will make an outcry if you speak of cold, and venture to tie a silk handkerchief about your neck; at others, regardless of your feelings, persist in muffling you to the throat."

"Now I propose," said the Count de Meurville, "that Mr. Fraser sketch the appropriate attire of a lady prepared for a drive in summer."

"I second the proposition," cried Miss Mandeville, "that I may in future conform more to his taste."

"Oh, I could not do that either," said Mr. Fraser; "I only know I like something substantial."

"Are you going to call any where, Madeline?" asked Lady Mandeville.

"No, it is too late, I believe," returned she; "but if Clifford has no objection, we will drive as far as Mrs. Goddard's to inquire whether she has received the books from London."

"I have no objection to go any where, or do any thing you like," said the Count de Meurville handing Miss Mandeville into the curricule, and then getting in himself.

"How confoundedly well your sister looks in that carriage, Sidney," said Lord Rossmollen; who now came from the house, and sauntered towards them: "I know many a man, and many a great one too," continued his Lordship, pulling up his cravat, and looking after the curricule, which was now descending through the dark dell of trees, "who would marry a girl on that account alone, had she no other attraction."

"Are you among the number, my Lord," inquired Mr. Mandeville.

"Oh, faith I am!" replied the young Earl whistling;

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"whenever I marry, it shall be a girl who will set off my curricule and my coronet, and I will ask nothing more."

"That will form your domestic felicity, will it? You do not require love?"

"Love!" repeated the Peer: "Oh no!—

*'My wishes, which never were bounded before,  
Are here bounded by friendship, and ask for no more.'*"

As Mrs. Vigers's carriage now drew up, Sidney led Miss Darcliff towards it; and in doing so, inquired of her whether she ever rode.

"Sometimes," was the reply; "the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana do frequently."

"I am told you and your daughter often ride, Lady Malverton?" said Mr. Mandeville as he came towards her.

"We do," replied the Countess; "and perhaps should oftener but for want of gentlemen: it is dull having no companion but the groom."

"That is a deficiency," returned he, "which we can at all times most easily and happily supply. Whenever you honour us by sending here, you shall have a reinforcement of cavaliers; it is an actual disgrace to the country, for you and your daughter ever to want company."

"It is not for want of candidates," said the Countess smiling, as she got into the carriage; "but I am a mother, you know, and obliged to be fastidious."

"You are the mother of Lady Georgiana Granville, and have good reason to be so," said he, bowing to her as the carriage drove off.

## CHAPTER V.

“And well do vanished frowns enhance  
The charm of every brightened glance;  
And dearer seems each dawning smile,  
For having lost its light awhile.”

MOORE.

To return to our fair Georgiana, whom we left in no very amiable frame of mind; we must acquaint our readers that on leaving the breakfast-parlour, she ran up to a room denominated “her boudoir,” and throwing herself on a sofa, cried with passion for nearly an hour; when, through weakness (she being very delicate,) her cries subsided into occasional and convulsive sobs; and they terminated in sleep; which, from exhaustion, finally overpowered her. So helpless and yet so haughty, so infantine and yet so high-spirited, was Georgiana. After remaining for about two hours in that sort of lethargic stupor which frequently succeeds violent agitation, she roused herself, and the remembrance of the past appeared like a dream; but it was one of those dreams from which, unfortunately, she had often awakened, and discovered to be founded on sad reality.

The first object that met the eyes of Georgiana was her breakfast, which had been left in the room, though she was insensible to it, and was not the less welcome for being undeserved. As soon as she had finished her solitary meal, she amused herself in arranging the plants in her green-house, (which opened out of the boudoir,) and in placing some of her fine flowering geraniums on a little veranda which was outside the windows. This veranda overhung a part of the orchard that close adjoined the road, and Georgiana used to delight in sitting early in the fine summer morning, at one of the windows, to observe the country people, as, laden with the produce of their respective farms and gardens, they



passed on their way to the London markets. And, indeed, among the carts filled with fine fruit and vegetables, the girls with eggs and butter, or water-cresses and mushrooms, and ploughmen driving their cattle, there were frequently objects that the glowing pencil of Morland might have transferred to a picture, and that the less magical one of Georgiana delighted to pourtray. But, perhaps, to view the picturesque was not the young lady's sole attraction here, and that the gaze of admiration with which she was beheld by those passing had its influence.

Georgiana's beauty possessed (independent of form and features) a luxuriance and brilliancy that would arrest alike the eye of the painter or the peasant, though the impression it would make on each might be widely different. As vanity was not, however, at this moment predominant in the bosom of Georgiana, and she was tired of assorting her plants, she left the green-house, and returned to her boudoir ; from one of the windows of which she saw Sophia Darcliff watering the flowers in the garden, and her mother walking with a book in her hand. It looked so pleasant that Georgiana longed to be out likewise ; and one moment was determined to ask forgiveness for her conduct at breakfast, and permission to join them : but the next, pride revived, and she sat down to her harp ; on which she had just commenced, " Since then I am doomed," when her mother entered the room through the green-house, which led by a flight of steps from the garden ; her cheeks were paler than usual, and her eyes turned with a sorrowful steadfastness on her daughter. " Georgiana," she said, after a few moments' silence, " you can form no idea of the anguish which your passions inflict on me, and I sincerely trust that experience will never enable you to conceive it ; that the time may *not* come, in which you will be the mother of a child, whose violent temper, reflecting your own, will retrace to your memory what I once suffered by your's. I know that my indulgence has been very great, but I still encouraged the hope that your amiability would justify it—that your affection would more do so : instead of that, I have the mortifi-

cation of beholding you at seventeen, (when childhood can no longer be pleaded as an excuse), deficient in many respects in the one, and often totally neglectful of the other. I have frequently warned you against the sad consequence of indulging passion ; I have pointed out the humiliating equality it may place us on with those to whom we consider ourselves vastly superior : for, like *love*, it has been truly said to level all distinctions. I have entreated your correction of a disposition so baneful ; but warning, advice, entreaty, have all been ineffectual, and your father will have the misery, when he returns to England, of beholding in you, at a more advanced period, the same violence of spirit which gave him so much uneasiness during your childhood. Or if he does not return to witness it, I shall most probably be the unhappy reporter of its continuance ; for I every day expect to receive letters announcing his coming, or expressing his wishes for me to join him. As the latter event is far most probable, and your accompanying me will, I imagine, be out of the case, whatever your sister may do ; I would implore you for your own sake, not to be regardless of the advice which, while you remain with me, I shall consider it my duty to give you whenever necessary. For retracing it in your memory when, separated from me, you can no longer hear it from my lips, will often prevent you from being misled by the dictates of your own proud heart, or the interested professions of affection and admiration, which your rank and fortune will render you liable to receive. But, perhaps," said the Countess, observing Lady Georgiana looked very unconcerned, "perhaps, you will rejoice when separated from your Mentor. And, far from wishing to perpetuate her precepts by retrospection, will endeavour to drown the remembrance of them in the pleasures of dissipation ; and think little of losing the affection of your mother, provided you have, to atone for it, the admiration of the world."

"Oh, Mamma ! can you imagine so ill of me ?" exclaimed Lady Georgiana, throwing herself into the arms

of the Countess; "Can you suppose I shall ever forget your advice, though I may not always profit by it; or that the applauses of an assembled world could make me happy—if I had lost your love?"

"I am very willing to believe, Georgiana," said the Countess, "that at this moment you feel yourself incapable of either, and fancy you ever will be so. But, alas! my child, what security can I have in your affection for me when absent, if even the slightest disappointment of vanity causes you, in my presence, to forget alike affection and duty; and give way to anger the most violent, and disrespect the most unpardonable?"

Georgiana wept; but could offer nothing in exculpation of her conduct except regret.

"In proportion as I love you," continued Lady Malverton, "must I lament that there should be any shades in your character—that you should not be as superior in temper as you are in every thing else."

The Countess presently left Lady Georgiana, having to prepare for her drive, and the carriage being already at the door. As soon as Lady Malverton, Mrs. Vigers, Miss Darcliff, had driven off, and Georgiana could fear no intrusion, she took a volume down from the shelf appropriated as a receptacle for books of a lighter kind, and threw herself on a sultana to read; with the hope of forgetting in an imaginary world, the gloomy prospects she at that moment formed of the real; but the ~~and~~ on which Georgiana opened, though beautiful was not altogether calculated to dispel her melancholy,—it was one of Mrs. Opie's, entitled, "The Russian Boy," in which a lady is supposed incessantly haunted by a lover whom she once refused, and whose "bright and terrible eyes," glaring on her sometimes in the darkness of night, and sometimes in the noon-day, nearly caused her derangement. In this tale Georgiana had proceeded some way, when she was startled by a voice behind her, repeating from it, "*Je te retrouve enfin.*" and on looking up, the mirror opposite to her reflected the form of the speaking behind her, who was Miss M'Dougal, the intimate friend of her ladyship,

whose vivacity of manner and conversation rendered her at all times an antidote to melancholy.

"How are you, dearest Juliet?" cried Georgiana, springing up; "it is an age since I have seen you!"

"And pray whose fault is that?" though not expressed, was implied in the intelligent eyes of Miss M'Dougal, as she seated herself and threw back her chip-hat, which was encircled with wild roses. "I have called so often," said she, "and been told that you were out, that I began to suspect the information false; and to satisfy myself as to its truth, to-day I ran upstairs without asking the old porter any questions, and he, knowing me well, did not arrest my progress. I looked into the sitting rooms, but all were empty; and I was going to return in despair, when this sanctum-sanctorum occurred to me, into which I glided, the door being partly open, without being perceived by you."

"I am sorry, dearest Juliet," said Georgiana, "that you should think I am ever denied to you when but I am really out; for, I assure you, there is no one it gives me more pleasure to see than yourself. And even when I am out," added her Ladyship, "you need not run away; for there is always some of the family at home, and any part would be delighted to see you."

"Excuse my candour, Georgiana," returned Miss M'Dougal; "but you are the only person I ever care to see. Your mother is so very superior, and so very penetrating, that I sink beneath her glance; then Mrs. Vigers, so respectable, so venerable. Such a mad-cap as I, am no companion for her!—and poor Sophia, though she is very good, and very amiable, and all that, does look so grave when I am rattling away."

"You have forgotten your friend Miss Staples," observed Georgiana, with an indescribable mixture of archness and gravity.

"Oh, Miss Crabtree!" said Juliet, laughing, "I had indeed forgotten that most agreeable appendage to the house, whose introduction into it will for ever remain an enigma to me."

"How do you know that she is not a relation of ours?" asked Lady Georgiana, smiling.

"If I were not certain that she is not," replied Miss M'Dougal, "I should scarcely, with all my thoughtlessness, speak so saucily of her as I generally do. It would be difficult, indeed, to persuade any one," continued she, "that a sour-faced, ugly personage like her, was related to Mr. and Mrs. Vigers, who are always so cheerful and good-natured; to your mother, so elegant and interesting; but, above all, to yourself, so charming!"

"I must tell Miss Staples how complimentary you are to her when she returns to-morrow," said Lady Georgiana.

"Oh, I believe it would be impossible," cried Miss M'Dougal, "by any additional sins, for me to be lower down in her good books than I am; but really, Georgiana, it is a matter of amazement to me how you, who are not deficient in spirit, can have patience with her affectation and lolly."

"It often does amuse me," returned Lady Georgiana.

"Oh, it is so ridiculous," continued Juliet, "to observe when she follows you all into church on Sunday, bridleing her crany neck, and trying to look so amiable; while you, Georgiana, without any endeavours at all, look so beautiful and so innocent, that the men follow you with their eyes, and the women pull down their veils to conceal their envy."

"I should be sorry, for the credit of my sex," said Lady Georgiana, with the air of one who really was, or affected to be, unconscious of her charms, "if I really thought their envy was so easily excited. You, Juliet, draw flattering pictures of those you love."

"If I were in your place," exclaimed Miss M'Dougal, "I should tease Miss Crabtree most unmercifully: I would ink her caps, notch her ribbons, crimple her frills, cut off the tops of her gloves, put cups and saucers in her bed, detonating balls in her shoes, and set all the young men quizzing her; in short, treat her as I used an old aunt of mine, who was a very similar piece of goods, and at whose expense I had many a laugh. But a truce to these hags, who are excellent Marplots in a

romance, but terrible bores and dead weights in real life. You must know, that since I have seen you, Georgiana, I have had an adventure—a romantic rencontre—I have seen such a man! To which of my favourite heroes shall I compare him?" continued this lively lady, as springing up on a stool which was before a book-case she ran her eye over some novels: "he is as interesting as Glenmurray, as charming as Valencourt, as lovely as Lord Mortimer!—

'Around his brow such martial graces shine,  
So tall, so awful, and almost divine.'

"I know whom you mean," cried Lady Georgiana; "it is the Count de Meurville, who is stopping at the Hermitage. When did you see him?"

"It was a day or two ago," replied Miss M'Dougal, "when I went to the cottage, which you admired so much the evening we were last walking together, and of which you took a sketch, with the old woman spinning before the door, the bird-cage, and little garden. It was there I met the Count de Meurville, and what brought him there you look a little puzzled to guess?"

"I am, indeed," said her Ladyship.

"Well, you must first hear what took me there," cried Miss M'Dougal. "In that cottage lives, you know, the little black-eyed boy, whom you could not prevail on to sit for his picture, who is grandson to the old woman, and has the high and mighty honour of being my godson: on which latter account I feel myself in duty bound occasionally to visit him. And during my last visitation, there came on such a shower of rain, that I was obliged to stay longer than I intended, when it occurred to me that I could do nothing better than give little George a lesson. Therefore, collecting all my patience, with a book in one hand, and holding the little fellow by the other, I sat down to teach A B C. Either he was particularly bright, or I particularly good-humoured, for he got on famously, which, by the bye, is not always the case; when our studies were interrupted by the appearance of a gentleman, who I

afterwards learnt was the Count de Meurville. From the moment of his entrance, the eyes of little George began to wander, and those of the Count, who begged the old woman to allow him to remain in the cottage during the shower, were rivetted on me. By degrees, I know not how, we got into conversation ; perhaps he thought I was the mother of the boy, and that praising him was the surest way to my favour, for he certainly was most lavish in his admiration. The child, as children usually are, I think, when taken notice of, was so bashful there was no getting him to speak ; he looked up with tears in his eyes at me ; ‘what is the matter, George,’ said I, ‘what makes you look so unhappy ?’ ‘Unhappy !’ repeated the Count de Meurville, ‘how is that possible when he is looking at you ?’ ‘I wish,’ said I, laughing, ‘that looking at me were an antidote, or even an anodyne to sorrow.’ I forget what the Count de Meurville said exactly ; but I believe it was something more complimentary than I should choose to repeat. We talked for some time longer, and when the shower was over, and I was preparing to run home alone, notwithstanding the entreaties of the Count to be allowed to accompany me, my brother came for me.”

“Upon my word, this was a very pretty adventure,” said Lady Georgiana ; “and I dare say the Count de Meurville’s thoughts often wander from the elegances and beauty which surround him at Hermitage, to the charms which arrested his eyes in the cottage of Dame Allan.”

“I very much suspect,” returned Miss M’Dougal laughing, “that the Count de Meurville’s thoughts are not so easily captivated.”

“It might be very difficult to captivate them,” observed her Ladyship, “and yet you might have done so.”

“If he were any where but at the Hermitage,” said Miss M’Dougal, “I might be more likely to indulge so presumptuous an idea ; but Lady Mandeville almost possesses the art of concentrating the thoughts of the object she deems worthy of her spells. She throws around him such golden and yet entangling nets, and

keeps up such a constant succession of pleasures and excitements, with luxury and refinement so anodyning, as to make the Hermitage appear a heaven, of which her daughters are the angels."

"The possession of one of which angels," said Lady Georgiana, with a dubious smile, "is to communicate an eternal elysium to the happy man who makes her his choice."

"Talking of the angels," returned Miss M'Dougal, "'tis said Lord Clavers is dying for Miss Mandeville; and that it is considering him his son elect makes Sir William so anxious he should be returned for the county."

"I very much doubt," replied Lady Georgiana, "whether the elegant and interesting Lord Clavers, the future Earl of Camelford, need despair of obtaining Miss Mandeville, if she be the object of his affections."

"Report also says," observed Miss M'Dougal, "that Mrs. Damer, who was married lately, you know, at the Hermitage, leads the most wretched, mortifying life that can possibly be. She has, poor thing! seen very little of the world, and being suddenly transplanted among those who have mixed in it so much, is awkward beyond expression."

"She must be a complete foil to her elegant cousins," observed Lady Georgiana.

"Exactly so," returned Miss M'Dougal; "Charles Damer, in a fit of folly or fondness, has married a woman who serves for little else. She was living with her father, a plain country gentleman in Kent, when Mr. Damer, who has a hunting lodge somewhere near there, saw her, was struck with her having a pretty face, and transplanted her from rusticity, where she was happy, to refinement, where she is miserable; and where she shows off to great advantage the superior breeding of those with whom she is surrounded, and who well know how to avail themselves of the contrast. The Miss Mandevilles," continued Miss M'Dougal, "are frequently downright rude to her; and Lady Mandeville, with all her affected *suave*, gives cuts and inuen-



does that make the poor thing colour up to her eyes every minute."

"I believe, if the truth were known," said Lady Georgiana, "that Lady Mandeville is scarcely more indignant at the poorness of the connexion Mr. Damer formed, than at his having ventured to form any at all, unless it had been with one of his cousins."

"I do not doubt," replied Miss M'Dougal, "that she thought he ought to have waited, and seen whether he was wanting as a *dernier resort* for her Madelina, or Charlotte, or one of them; and unable to attack him for disappointing her expectations, she makes his wife suffer in a thousand ways for having been his choice."

"I almost wonder," observed Lady Georgiana, "that her husband will allow her to remain where she is subjected to such mortifications."

"The miseries she endures, though bitter, are of too minor a nature," observed Miss M'Dougal, "for a man to enter into; or for a woman, particularly a bride, to complain of without incurring the imputation of discontent and ill-humour: besides, Mr. Damer is out for the most part all the morning; and in the evening, when there is a general aspect of cheerfulness and good-humour, men are seldom inclined to investigate the cause or regard any shade of latent discontent that may cloud the countenance of a wife. But to give you a specimen of Miss Mandeville's good-natured way, I will tell you a circumstance, which, though trifling, fully evinces it, and which occurred when I was stopping at the Hermitage about a week ago. It happened that some of the company, principally the younger part, were assembled rather earlier than usual in the drawing-room, after dressing for dinner; among others, Mrs. Damer, Miss Mandeville, and myself; when, for want of something better, the subject of discussion was the pretensions to beauty which a lady who had called in the morning, and with whom we were to drink tea in the evening, possessed. Every body gave their respective opinion: one, that she was pretty; another, that she was passable; myself, that she was interesting;

Mrs. Damer, that she was beautiful. Upon which latter encomium being expressed, Miss Mandeville, assuming a look of forgetfulness, suddenly exclaimed, 'Who was it that was saying to me this morning they thought her very plain? Who could it be?' she continued, putting her finger gracefully to her forehead, as if to recall her recollection, which very conveniently returning, she cried, with an air of affected surprise, 'I declare it was Caroline!' and fixed her own eyes, as well as attracted those of the company, on Mrs. Damer; whose face, arms, and neck, became scarlet."

"Unfortunate Caroline!" said Lady Georgiana.

"You should say 'poor Caroline!'" returned Julia; "as Miss Mandeville does on every occasion."

"But it certainly was very wrong in Mrs. Damer," observed Lady Georgiana, "to express such different opinions on the same subject, within so short a time; however trifling the matter in question was."

"Certainly!" replied Miss M'Dougal: "but she afterwards told me, that remembrance of a piece of advice Miss Mandeville had once given her, flashing across her mind at the moment, determined her on expressing a different opinion from what she had done before."

"I suppose the advice," said Lady Georgiana, "was always to incline to the side of admiration when a lady's beauty was the topic of conversation before gentlemen; as not doing so, is generally attributed by them to envy."

"Exactly so," returned Miss M'Dougal, "and Mrs. Damer had reason to repent following her friend's advice, for Miss Mandeville, not content with her first exclamation, continued, though she saw her cousin was ready to sink into the earth with confusion; 'Indeed, Caroline, any lady may think herself most happy, whom you condescend to admire, for you are the most severe creature I ever knew.' Mrs. Damer appeared really overcome by shame, which was increased when a gentleman, with the good-natured hope of relieving it, asked Miss Mandeville, 'whether she was privileged to con-

demn criticism in others, by never indulging in it herself.' 'Without vanity I may say I am,' replied Miss Mandeville, 'as mere policy would prevent it.' Of course every one was anxious," continued Miss M'Dougal, "to know what political motives could induce the fair Madelina to such forbearance. In explanation of which she observed, that to be severe on others, would draw down criticism on herself, which she had no pretension to stand, 'But Caroline,' she added, looking at Mrs. Damer, 'need not fear animadversion: she has beauty that would stand its test.' Now this compliment to her cousin was made with all the appearance of good-nature, and it evidently astonished Mr. Damer, who entered in time to overhear it, that his wife should appear discontented and ready to cry; but I, who knew Miss Mandeville well enough to know that her speech was made for the company to contrast the elegant manners and appearance of herself, who never criticised, and the clumsy, awkward one of Mrs. Damer who presumed to do so, was not the least surprised that the latter should be annoyed rather than complimented."

"That is so exactly Miss Mandeville," said Lady Georgiana, when Miss M'Dougal concluded; "and so exactly like what her sister Mrs. Balfour was,—delighting to make others appear to disadvantage, and yet assuming a manner so plausible that you had no redress. I recollect well," continued her Ladyship, "though it is now years ago, the tone of bitterness, and yet assumed softness, in which Miss Mandeville observed to me, that it was fortunate her campaign was commencing before mine, or she supposed there would be no hearts left to conquer."

"Had she commenced with conquering her own heart," observed Miss M'Dougal, "she would probably ere this have made a lasting conquest of some other. But while I am talking and philosophizing at such a rate," said this young lady, with a sigh that was strangely contrasted to her late sprightly tones, "I am the most wretched of human creatures!"

"You wretched, my Juliet!" cried Lady Georgiana: "I hope you only fancy so."

"It is something more than fancy," returned Miss M'Dougal. "At present, indeed, my unhappiness is but anticipatory, and I do not allow my spirits to be cast down: but I fear it will soon become actual; for," continued she, as her bright eyes glistened in tears, "my guardians insist on my forming a marriage, which my soul detests!"

"I should not have thought," said Lady Georgiana, "that such apparently easy, good-natured people as Mr. and Mrs. Brocklesby, ever insisted on your doing any thing that you did not like."

"It certainly is not so much they who do," replied Miss M'Dougal, "as Mr. Risport, another of my guardians, who resides in London, and whom they wrote to, informing him of the excellent offer, so they designated it, which had been made me by a Mr. Cawdor. This intelligence, and that of my opposition to accepting the proposals, brought, as I feared and expected, good Mr. Risport down; who, on the evening after his arrival, summoned me to walk with him in the garden: and thither we proceeded, I knowing well what I was to expect, though he did not immediately come to the point, but talked of the beauty of the flowers, the fineness of the fruit, the clearness of the sky. When these subjects, however, were exhausted, I trembled. He cleared his throat; and, pulling himself more erect than usual, began, with a look as grave and voice as pompous as good Mr. Winters when giving out his text on Sunday, to congratulate me on the advantageous connexion I was about to form. Perceiving a dead silence on my part, the man asked me, (affecting not to know,) whether the proposals were not perfectly agreeable to me.

"'They are perfectly disagreeable,' returned I."

"'Miss M'Dougal,' said he, with a most petrifying frown; 'I am at a loss to understand you.'"

"'And yet, 'tis very easy, Sir,' said I; 'I do not like Mr. Cawdor; I could never love him.'"

“ ‘Love!’ repeated the old bachelor, with a most contemptuous curl of his lip; ‘pray who thinks of love now-a-days?’

“ ‘I never intend to marry, without thinking of it,’ coldly replied I.

“ ‘Romantic stuff! ridiculous nonsense!’ he audibly articulated; and a silence ensued, which was broken by his demanding, whether I had any other objections to Mr. Cawdor but that of not being able to love him?

“ ‘Have you any thing to urge in his favour, except the number of his acres?’ inquired I, with the most provoking *sang-froid*.

“ ‘There is every thing to urge in his favour,’ replied the gentleman haughtily; ‘and I shall esteem myself happy, Miss M’Dougal, as holding the responsible situation of your guardian, if you never throw yourself away but upon one half as deserving. Mr. Cawdor is,’ concluded my guardian emphatically, ‘an honest man.’

“ ‘An honest man!’ repeated I, in a disappointed tone; (for I assure you, Georgiana, it made my blood run cold, to think of that being the only encomium merited by my future husband,) I never suspected him of being the contrary, Sir.’

“ ‘And he is a good young man,’ added Mr. Risport; not taking notice, I believe, of my reply to his former eulogium.

“ ‘You are unfortunate in your epithets of praise,’ observed I: ‘a good young man always conveys to me the idea of a stupid dolt.’

“ ‘It conveys then to you, Miss, a different idea, from what it conveys to every one else,’ was the reply.

“ ‘Perhaps it does,’ said I.

“ ‘You have not yet given me,’ he continued, ‘one sensible reason for your rejection of Mr. Cawdor; and, I verily believe, you have not one to give.’

“ ‘Oh, indeed! I have very good reasons,’ said I; determined to provoke him for his impertinence in forming such a supposition; by putting on the silliest look and voice imaginable.

“ ‘And what are they, Miss?’ demanded he.

“ ‘I have several objections,’ returned I. ‘In the first place, he has so much the cut of a squire, and seems as if he understood nothing but about the improvement of cattle and crops and land; and I should hate to be the Squire’s lady, and hear people call me Lady Bountiful, if I were condescending and charitable: if not, in audible whispers, have my appearance announced, Here comes Madam; or That’s the Squire and Madam;—

‘Perhaps see the whispering fools inquire,  
Why pouts my Lady?’ or ‘Why frowns the Squire?’

But what I think worse of than all,’ added I, pulling a rose-bud to pieces; ‘is his having red hair; I do so hate red hair.’ My respected guardian had kept his temper with difficulty during the former part of my speech, but this postscript to it about the red-hair, seemed the signal for doing so no longer. He told me I talked ‘like a child, like a woman,’ two things he considered synonymous; that I was ‘a silly romantic girl, who had read novels till I expected to find every man a hero, and every hero a lover:’ in short, he intimated that I was a fool, though he did not dare actually to call me one, knowing that would raise the spirit of M’Dougal a little too high in the bosom of your Juliet. But he did tell me, that if I refused to listen to his advice in this instance, it was the last time he should ever offer it, the last time I should receive counsel from one who had been deputed to give it, while acceptable, by my dying father. This was an appeal too sacred to be treated with levity even by me: ‘Sir,’ said I, ‘you shall do with me what you choose.’ Upon which he held out his hand to me, told me I acted like myself, and worthy of the father whose memory I so much venerated; in short, said a thousand things that he would have as soon cut off his head as said a moment before. But notwithstanding all his compliments, I assure you, Georgiana, I repented the moment after I had made that speech of mine: it certainly was an extremely

magnanimous, but I began to think an extremely rash one."

"Well! I must say, Juliet," observed Lady Georgiana, "that if you had no stronger objections to Mr. Cawdor than those you mentioned to your guardian, I do not think them sufficiently cogent to justify a refusal of him."

"Oh, I did not mention my principal objection to him," replied Miss M'Dougal; "because I knew it would be touching on a tender point: it is that of being a middle-aged man; the period of life of all others at which men are most disagreeable and stubborn. Incapable of entering into the warm feelings of youth, and not attained to the dignity of age, they affect to forget the former, and are angry when thought approaching the latter."

"I must differ in opinion with you," said Lady Georgiana; "it is a time of life which, if I were selecting a husband, I should prefer him to be at: it is a period at which he would be best calculated to be what I have often heard you say would be the summit of your ambition—a guide, philosopher, and friend."

"Oh, if Mr. Cawdor were capable of being that," involuntarily exclaimed Juliet, the idea pleasing her romantic mind; "but he is such a boor, such a Goth; he cannot even say anything new in paying his addresses, but makes the hackneyed declaration that the happiness of his future life depends on me."

"What can man say more?" asked Lady Georgiana, smiling.

"My dear, dear Georgiana, can you ask such a question! Why he should tell me that he could not live without me, that unless blessed with my possession life would become an insupportable burden to him, and the world appear but as a wilderness! that he thought of nothing, lived for nothing, loved nothing on earth in comparison with myself!"

Lady Georgiana laughed, and repeated

"Let Cawdor travel, rest, stand still, or walk,  
Still he should nothing but of Juliet talk;  
E'en write to his father, ending with this line,  
I am, my heavenly Juliet, ever thine."

Just as her Ladyship repeated these lines, a carriage stopped at the door, which both she and Miss M'Dougal recognised to be Mrs. Torrens's.

"Am I fit to be seen?" was the exclamation of Lady Georgiana, as she ran over to a mirror and surveyed her dress, which consisted of a muslin wrapper interspersed with work and lace.

"Fit to be seen! my dear Georgiana," said Miss M'Dougal, "you are never otherwise."

"Well, then, we will descend and give these people audience," returned her Ladyship, twisting her watch-chain more intricately in her muslin sash.

"*Allons !*" cried Miss M'Dougal, and the two young ladies descended.

The visitors consisted of Mrs. Torrens and her two daughters : the former was correct, genteel, but stupid ; the latter were fashionable in dress and appearance, but very silent.

After conversing on various trifling topics, Mrs. Torrens expressed as much anxiety as she thought it lady-like to express on any subject, to see some dessert plates which Lady Georgiana had lately painted, and she had heard spoken of as beautiful.

"Oh ! I should like to see them, of all things," said each of the young ladies, breaking silence for the first time.

"I wish they were more worthy of your inspection," observed Lady Georgiana, as she left the room to fetch them.

"I think Lady Georgiana looks more lovely every time I see her, Miss M'Dougal," said Mrs. Torrens, fixing her eyes on Juliet, with whom she was previously acquainted ; "and so graceful, and so dignified," she added : "I cannot conceive, for my part, how the Countess of Malverton has inculcated such ease of manner in one so young."

"Lady Georgiana's are native graces," returned Miss M'Dougal, looking at the Misses Torrens.

"Lady Malverton must be a very happy mother," observed Mrs. Torrens, with a sigh, which seemed to intimate that she herself was not ; and a silence ensued,



broken only by the re-appearance of Lady Georgiana with her painted china.

"How charmingly done!" exclaimed Mrs. Torrens, as she carefully took one of the plates.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the young ladies, following her example.

"I wish, Cecilia," said Mrs. Torrens to her eldest daughter, "that you could paint like this."

"You know I never tried painting on china, Mamma," replied Miss Torrens, looking reproachfully at her mother.

"Well, I mean I wish you would try," said the latter, in a pacific tone; and turning to Lady Georgiana, she continued, "I suppose your Ladyship painted these in the biscuit."

"Yes," replied Lady Georgiana, who was standing by, with the wandering eye and vacant smile of one to whom praise had ceased to be a novelty.

"They are very like the plates that Lady Olivia Oranmore painted last winter," whispered the youngest Miss Torrens to her sister.

"Not at all," replied Cecilia; "hers was a glass, and a flower on each, whereas these are china, with fruit represented."

"Well, I mean they have something the same effect," muttered Miss Helen.

"They are perfectly different," persisted Cecilia.

"I suppose you have had a great deal of instruction in drawing, Lady Georgiana," said Mrs. Torrens.

"I frequently go up to town," returned her Ladyship, "and generally take a few lessons when there."

"You profit by them, indeed," observed Mrs. Torrens, as she rang the bell to order her carriage to the door.

"My mother draws extremely well," said Lady Georgiana, "so that I am never at a loss for an instructor, even in the country."

After a little more conversation of a desultory kind, Mrs. Torrens and her daughters took leave, the latter more than ever disliking and envying Lady Georgiana, who, during the whole of the visit, had appeared superior indeed.

They had seen her but once before, and then not near enough to judge of her person and manners, which close inspection proved to be as perfect as fame had represented.

As soon as the visitors had gone, Lady Georgiana insisted on Miss M'Dougal's going with her to the garden, which after some little hesitation she consented to.

The young ladies when there amused themselves in pulling fruit and flowers, and were preparing to return in, after a short time, when, through a door near them, which opened from the plantations, came Mr. Vigers and Mr. Granville: the former was the respectable owner of Abbeyvalley, who had been in London for some weeks past, and whose arrival had been daily expected; the latter, a brother of the Earl of Malverton, and consequently uncle of Lady Georgiana. The two gentlemen had arrived by the coach about half an hour before, and walked up from the town where it stopped.

Lady Georgiana expressed the greatest delight at seeing them, and asked a hundred questions as she hung attentively about her grandfather and uncle, while Miss M'Dougal, unrelated to either, participated from long acquaintance with each in the pleasure felt by her friend.

They now all returned to the house, and found the party who had been visiting were come back; it was indeed past five o'clock, and Miss M'Dougal, who was in vain pressed to stay for dinner, returned home.

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## CHAPTER VI.

"All other faults may take a higher aim,  
But hopeless envy must be still the same;  
Some other passions may be turn'd to good,  
But envy must subdue or be subdued."

THE lady whom Miss M'Dougal so unceremoniously denominated Miss Crabtree, but whose real name was Staples, we have not, from her having been on a visit

since our narrative commences, regularly introduced yet to our readers ; but as she returned early in the morning on which our chapter opens, it may not be improper here to present her to notice. Miss Staples was arrived at that period in a lady's life, at which, when she arrives unmarried, she is usually denominated an old maid : she had been originally introduced into the house as a sort of companion to Mrs. Vigers, who, after the marriage of her three daughters, felt herself somewhat lonely from the want of a female companion ; and though for these last two years the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana Granville had resided at the Abbey, and even before that period Miss Darcliff, an orphan girl, whom Mrs. Vigers had undertaken to provide for, yet she did not like to dismiss one who for a long time had contributed to her comfort. Enjoying a situation whose duties once consisted in writing for or reading to Mrs. Vigers, but which had since Miss Darcliff's arrival become a mere sinecure, those duties being transferred to her, Miss Staples trifled away her time in a monotonous series of walking, visiting, going to small parties, making and new modelling her dresses, reading novels, and returning them to the library. Aiming to be what nature had never intended her, and sighing for advantages which fortune had denied her, she added to frivolity of mind a discontent of every thing connected with herself, and envy of the blessings of others. Possessing a disposition so unfortunate, Miss Staples had constant sources of irritation, though practised command of features generally prevented its being discernible in her countenance. Few, however, were such objects of secret envy and dislike to her as Lady Malverton and her daughter ; she had always dreaded the idea of the Countess coming to reside at the Abbey, fearing her Ladyship's keenness would penetrate the veil of affected humility and placidity which she always wore, and expose to the eyes of Mrs. Vigers the malice and selfishness it concealed. In these anticipations she was not wholly mistaken ; the Countess fully saw, and made Miss Staples aware that

she saw, the paltry materials which composed her character, though, considering it worthy nothing more than pity, she did not express her opinion on the subject to Mrs. Vigers ; who she knew felt partiality for Miss Staples from long custom of having her about her, and pity from knowing she was born to a higher station than that circumstances had obliged her family to accept of for her. Towards Georgiana the dislike of Miss Staples might have had some excuse, had it been only excited by the many unamiable qualities of that young lady, who, besides indulging in passions such as we have described, could at times assume all the haughtiness and insolence we frequently see in high-born caressed beauty ; but it proceeded from a withering envy, that caused her to detest the sight of a creature enjoying so many advantages, to sicken at the sight of a planet obscured by whose dazzling light she lived.

But as illustration is as much better than description, as example than precept, we shall, without further delineation of character, introduce our readers into the drawing-room at the Abbey, where on the morning after that we have described in our last chapter, were assembled the Countess of Malverton, Lady Georgiana Granville, Miss Darcliff, and Miss Staples. The Countess, seated near a window, was finishing a bonnet she had begun some days before. Her daughter was painting a landscape, Miss Darcliff working, and Miss Staples, who had arrived very early that morning, was cutting out patterns at a large table covered with work and insertion.

"We must not forget," observed Lady Malverton, glancing at a note on the chimney-piece, "to send that invitation to Hermitage."

"How long have the Mandevilles been in the country?" asked Miss Staples; "have you seen them yet?"

"About a fortnight," replied the Countess; "we called on them yesterday, and stayed for a long time."

"I suppose there is no speaking to them now," said Miss Staples, affecting to laugh; "they are so grand after their residence abroad."

"Indeed," returned Lady Malverton, who delighted to provoke Miss Staples; "I think they are much as they always were: to them, accustomed to enjoy every luxury which England can produce, and to mix in the first society it affords, going abroad could have been no such transporting circumstance. Indeed, I believe it was from motives of economy, rather than pleasure, they went."

"One of the daughters is a perfect beauty, is she not?" asked Miss Staples; "the one who was not at home till lately."

"Do you mean Agnes?" inquired Miss Darcliff.

"Oh! she may be Agnes, or Anastasia, or Amabel, or anything else out of the way, for they have such a parcel of fine ridiculous names among them," replied Miss Staples with a sneer; "but I believe indeed, it was Agnes, for I recollect hearing people say, they supposed Lady Mandeville intended her for a nun."

"She would make a very pretty nun," observed the Countess; in a tone that rendered it dubious in which sense her expression was to be taken.

"She is very pretty, then?" said Miss Staples.

"Yes, very," returned the Countess. "Like Miss Mandeville and Mrs. Balfour."

"I am sure," said Miss Staples, "I hope, for her own sake, that she is like her sisters in nothing but person; for I think they are two of the most disagreeable young women I ever met in my life."

"I do not know what Mrs. Balfour might have been," observed the Countess, "for I never saw much of her; but I think Miss Mandeville's manners are much to be admired."

"Tastes differ," remarked Miss Staples, knowingly; "but for my part I hate that excess of helplessness and refinement, which Miss Mandeville affects."

"It is at least a feminine affectation," observed the Countess; "and I can forgive it sooner than the independent carelessness of Charlotte, or the indifferent bluntness of Arabella."

"Oh! if you go to Miss Arabella Mandeville," cried

Miss Staples, with a sneer, "any one would gain by comparison with her."

"I do not mean to say," continued the Countess, regardless of Miss Staple's observation, "that I believe Miss Mandeville to possess the extreme refinement of mind which she does of manner, for I have seen those dulcet tones and downcast looks played off at the time when she was exhibiting her figure in attitudes, either by waltzing or at the harp, which no really delicate girl could have done."

"Well," said Miss Staples, "give me realities; I hate affectation: and I am sure where I was stopping I saw little of it, and yet there were as nice girls at Nutbury as Hermitage can boast."

"Indeed," said the Countess drily.

"Yes, indeed," continued Miss Staples, suspending her cutting out for a minute or two, "six charming girls, I assure you. There was Maria, the eldest, who they said was the mother's favourite: and such a housekeeper as she was! not a bit of trouble had Mrs. Letton herself, Maria did every thing. I am sure I used to joke her, and say she made a fine lady of Reece, the real housekeeper; for they kept one, to be sure. Then there was Fanny, she was the beauty! but not such a beauty as one of the Miss Mandevilles, no airs about her, nothing of the fine lady; but just as humble as if she were plain. Then Susan, Sukey as they used to call her for brevity, she was clever at her needle, as good as a mantua-maker; 'twas she gave me these patterns. Then Lucy——"

"Had *her* name any abbreviation?" interrupted Lady Georgiana, with a slight elevation of the eyebrows.

"Oh, no! it was short enough. And a fine, good-humoured girl she was. But they were all pleasant girls," concluded Miss Staples, with a sort of sigh; "I am sure I was very sorry to part with them;—and their brother (they had but one,) was a genteel, well-behaved young man; not one who would look at a lady standing while he was sitting, or stare at her through his glass, or make impertinent remarks on her dress, (as I have

seen many a young man do,) but an obliging, agreeable, young gentleman, who made himself useful to the ladies every way he could, and never obtruded himself on any one."

"Was he a schoolboy?" innocently asked Lady Georgiana.

"Nothing like it," returned Miss Staples, a little nettled. "A finished young man. But here," added she, sweeping some litter from the table, "comes a carriage. Whose can it be?"

"Whose can it be?" repeated the Countess, looking out of the window.

"It is the Boswells'," said Lady Georgiana; "Mr. and Mrs. Boswell."

"So it is," said Lady Malverton, as she replied to the servant's interrogation of, "Whether they would be at home?" in the affirmative. "I forgot the Boswells had to call," continued her Ladyship; when a deafening knock at the door announced their arrival. And in a few moments, Mr. and Mrs. Boswell were ushered into the room: the latter, fashionably but not showily dressed, was in person slight, rather *under* than above the middle size, with eyes so bright that they must be the first things to attract attention, and feet so beautifully small that they could not be the last.

The ill-natured part of the town of —— had long ago pronounced Mrs. Boswell high in manner, and spirited in temper; because, though young and pretty, she went out but little when in the country, and was extremely particular with regard to her children and servants. Whether there was any better foundation for their opinion of her temper and manner than these circumstances, we do not know; but leave our readers to draw their conclusions from her conversation.

Mrs. Boswell commenced, by regretting she had not been at home the day they called,—saying, "that Mr. Boswell had insisted on her going out riding that morning; she had confined herself so much since they came from town, and had been so busy unpacking and arranging.

The Countess of Malverton, experienced on the subject, entered feelingly into all the miseries of a recent arrival, and recommended *patience* as the only resource.

"Unfortunately," said Mrs. Boswell, laughing, "it is the commodity in the world of which I possess the least share. Now, he," said she, looking at her husband, "has an unusual stock ; not all the stupid blundering of the people about us can discompose him, while it makes me nearly mad."

"Why, I think," said Mr. Boswell, smiling, and with the air of one who did not always venture to say exactly what he thought—"I think, getting into a passion does not do much good."

"Much good!" repeated his wife; "why, it does this much good; that it puts every one on the *qui vive* to obey you; does it not, Lady Malverton?" said she, with an appealing glance.

"Oh, it is very necessary, now and then," returned the Countess; "some people cannot be wrought upon by gentler means."

"I hate your easy-going, quiet sort of people," observed Mrs. Boswell, looking at a book which was lying on the table.

"Have you seen that work, Mrs. Boswell?" inquired Lady Malverton; "it is quite a new one."

"So I perceive," returned the lady. "No, I have not read it, but I have heard of it; it is reckoned well written, is it not?" said she, raising her eyes.

"Very, I believe," said the Countess, "and as far as I have gone I like it extremely."

"You are fond of reading, Mrs. Boswell," observed Lady Georgiana, "if I recollect right."

"Oh, amazingly!" returned she, "I could amuse myself with it from morning till night."

"We *must* get our library to rights, Diana," said her husband, who had strolled over to a book-case at the other end of the room.

"I hope you will give me full credit, Mr. Boswell," cried she, "for having kept it in your memory; I am



sure I have done little but bore you about it ever since we came to Sea-Park."

"Oh! I will do you the justice Di, to say it is not your fault," returned he with a significant shake of his head. "I see, Lady Malverton, you have got my egotistical namesake here," he added, opening a volume of Boswell's Johnson.

"Did you ever know a collection of books where that was not?" said Mrs. Boswell.

"Yes, indeed," returned he, "and our own at the head of the list."

"Our own!" said she; "why we have got it: only the fact is, you do not go into the library once in six months, and therefore cannot tell what we have got."

"It is a very favourite work of mine," observed Lady Malverton; "I think it is impossible to read the life of Dr. Johnson without loving Mr. Boswell."

"It is extremely entertaining," said she; "one can always read it with new pleasure. And his Tour to the Hebrides! Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides is also delightful. But it is growing late, you must allow me to ring for the carriage. We have to go on to Hermitage this morning; I have not paid my respects there yet. You have, I presume."

"Yes, we were there yesterday," replied the Countess.

"They are all at home, are they not?" said Mrs. Boswell.

"I think so," returned her Ladyship. "All except Mrs. Balfour, and she is expected down soon on a visit."

"Well, I must make the best of my way there now," said Mrs. Boswell, as her carriage was announced. "Mr. Boswell, you seem to have a design on those books; will you be so kind as to wish them good morning and attend me?"

"I beg a thousand pardons," cried he, "I was so absorbed in the history of Jane of Navarre—"

"And forgot your own Diana," said she; as once more bidding them adieu, and begging her compliments.

might be presented to Mr. Vigers, she descended the stairs.

The dinner party at the Abbey was enlarged to-day by the addition of a young man of the name of Douglas; who had been expected for some time past, and whose coming had been frequently postponed. He seemed calculated to stand as a prototype of the whole race of young men, whose more agreeable opposites Miss Staples had sketched in the morning; and was therefore beheld with as evil an eye by her, as she, in spite of the showy ribbon she had mounted in her cap, was indifferently regarded by him.

Heir to a fine fortune, possessed of a fine person, and nephew to the Marquess of Glenallan, Henry Douglas affected (at five-and-twenty) the independence of a man of fortune, and the ease of a man of fashion; but not having yet attained to the apathy of a man of the world, he could not behold, without evident wonder and admiration, the beauty of Lady Georgiana Granville, which seemed to him to exceed every thing he had ever seen. He hung on her looks; he watched her eyes; as if to discover the dispositions which animated a frame so faultless, and could discover nothing there but what gave indication of tempers as lovely as herself.

Seated beside her at dinner, he remarked the same superiority to pervade her conversation as her person and manner.

In the evening, Mr. Granville, who was very cheerful, proposed a reel in compliment of their *Scotch* visiter. Douglas was delighted at the idea, and claimed the hand of Lady Georgiana, while Mr. Granville took Miss Darcliff, and Lady Malverton began a lively tune on the piano. Miss Staples, annoyed at being disregarded, gave herself up to a regular fit of ill-humour; divided between the alternate intention of flying out of the room in *visible* displeasure, or remaining till some opportunity might occur of marring the pleasure of those amused.

While resting after dancing, Lady Georgiana stood with her partner at a window near the upper end of the

room, to admire the beauty of the sky, which was brilliant with stars.

Douglas described to her, in an animated manner, the effect of such an evening at Glenallan Castle, (his uncle's seat in Scotland.) "There," said he "where the scenery is of that wild, Alpine description, which would have suited the pencil of Salvator, the appearance of such a night as this is grand beyond description."

"How I should like to live there!" involuntarily exclaimed Lady Georgiana; who little thought at that moment how hateful every thing connected with Glenallan would one day become to her.

"I am sure you would admire it as a landscape," returned Douglas; "but I rather fancy you would consider it too sublime for a residence. My uncle is never there since his wife's death, except in the shooting season; when I am usually with him. It has been thought like Warwick Castle—whether justly or not, I cannot tell."

"Anything which is like Warwick Castle, must be beautiful," observed Mr. Granville.

"Well," said Douglas, "I have heard many compare my uncle's place to it; but I don't know: I think Glenallan Castle more gloomy than, from the pictures I have seen of it, I can imagine Warwick; it is so clouded with woods—so stunning with waterfalls—so encircled by mountains."

"It must be such a castle as one sometimes meets with in Switzerland," observed Lady Malverton.

"Exactly," said Douglas: "when I was in Switzerland, I saw many places which reminded me of Glenallan."

"How long has the late Marchioness been dead?" inquired Mrs. Vigers.

"Nearly four years now," returned Douglas; "she was an angel of a woman!" he added with a sigh.

"Your uncle's fortune is immense; is it not?" said Mr. Granville.

"Oh, princely! Such a fortune as you don't meet every day. I wish I were his son."

"Why you have as good a chance of coming in for it as if you were," observed Mrs. Vigers.

"Not at all, Madam," returned Douglas; "my uncle will marry, as sure as you are sitting there, whenever he meets a girl to his mind."

"He won't look out for fortune, at any rate," said Mrs. Vigers.

"No, but every thing else; and every thing else he has a right to expect."

Thus the party continued chatting, till prayers and supper concluded the evening.

## CHAPTER VII.

"Stranger, didst thou ever prove—  
Ever, what it is to love?  
Stranger, didst thou ever feel  
What thou dar'st not to reveal?  
I have proved, and I have felt,  
What a heart of stone would melt!"

*From the Count De Meurville to the Baron Roncevalles.*

MY DEAR BARON,

THREE weeks have elapsed since you and I last shook hands at Calais, and three hours have not elapsed during that time in which I have not thought of you and your parting words—"Remember Annette." Ah, De Roncevalles, it was an unnecessary injunction. How can I forget Annette, while I behold Agnes? How can I forget the woman I hate, when she will for ever deprive me of the woman I love. Exposing myself to the fascinations of the latter by remaining at Hermitage, is, I well know, following the inclinations of my heart. Whereas, tearing myself away from it, would be obeying the dictates of a better counsellor—my reason. But thinking, as I cannot help doing, that I am not wholly indifferent to Agnes, in spite of the displeasure she ever affects towards me when I speak to her of herself, I am

unequal to the effort of leaving her, and verily believe I always shall, unless it be as her husband.

I know, I anticipate, what you will say, De Roncevalles: you will reproach me; and I deserve your reproaches. For, deaf to the voice of conscience, I am indulging a passion for one woman, when fate has irrevocably destined me for another. But however you condemn your friend, you must not his Agnes. I am guilty of loving her, but she is innocent of seducing my love; on the contrary, it is by her lips, from which I wish to fall sentiments of affection that I am for ever reminded of my duty to another.

It was but the other day, when we happened to be alone together, she requested me to fulfil a promise I had often made, of showing her Annette's picture, which I then went for and brought to her; telling her at the same time, how much dearer it would be to me were it her own. Of this she took little notice; but said, that were she Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe, she would renounce a lover who was so indifferent to her as not to wear her picture when separated from her.

"Beautiful Agnes," said I, "of no lover of yours will you ever have reason to complain."

"Well," returned she, "let not Annette have reason to complain of hers: wear this picture, Clifford, and whenever you are tempted to forget your mistress, let its touch, like the ring of Amurath, in the fairy tale, recall your heart to its allegiance." I threw my arms around her, I implored her to fasten round my neck the portrait which, had it been her own, would have proved a spell to soften every wild tempestuous passion, to chase every unhallowed desire.

She did not comply with my request unmoved; tears started in her eyes, as she attached the picture to a chain she took from her neck.

"Will you not, Agnes," said I, sickening at the sight, "let your gentle admonitions assist the silent influence of this cold, unlovely image. Will you not be to me the kind directing angel, whose guidance I so often need."

"Ah, Clifford," returned she, averting her eyes from the ardent gaze of mine, and hiding her blushes on my shoulder: "the Mentor would be much too inadequate; the Telemachus far too dear."

"I wish I could think the latter," murmured I; when we heard some one approaching the door, and Agnes, swift as lightning, left the room by another. How dear!—how very dear such a creature must be to me! you, De Roncevalles, may form an idea. Love, repressed by principle, timidity, and every thing that should influence a female bosom, appears with dignity in her:—under restraints less salutary, too often with a maddening impetuosity in your friend."

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As the remainder of the Count de Meurville's letter concerns persons and things wholly uninteresting to the reader, we shall omit it: having made this quotation merely to introduce them to the situation in which he was placed; betrothed to one woman, and loving another. The former engagement had been contracted at the earnest request of his father; whom he believed to be dying, when he extorted the promise. The latter affection was commenced when he met Agnes Mandeville abroad, though wholly unknown to her parents, who would not have bestowed her on him, all accomplished as the Count de Meurville was, and indebted as they were to him, for having been the means of saving the life of one of their sons. For, besides the necessity which a peculiar clause in her aunt's will rendered unavoidable, of losing her fortune if she married a foreigner, Lady Mandeville's vanity would induce her to prefer having Agnes well united in her own country, to being more splendidly so in another. She would rather, were it optional, be enabled to call on her, to introduce her as a Countess, than to talk of her as a Queen. With regard to Agnes, when first she met the Count de Meurville abroad, she had been fascinated by the dignity of his manner and elevation of his mind; while he, brought up in an intriguing Court, acquainted with the

dissimulation of man, still better with the wiles of woman, beheld with admiration in her a creature unvitiated by the flattery of the former, apparently a stranger to even the innocent artifices of the latter. And for a girl who continued thus unsophisticated, when the example of all around her was calculated to corrupt, he felt, to use the simile of an admired writer, as we should do at beholding a beautiful child playing on the verge of a precipice ; with Lady Mandeville for a mother, who possessed no refinement or delicacy of mind, and sisters who followed her example. The Count de Meurville pitied Agnes, who had but lately come among them ; and the pity of an elegant and interesting man, for a lovely and amiable girl, soon kindled, as may be imagined, into love. Into love, rather expressed by looks than words ; increased by the confiding gentleness of her manner, and encouraged by the value she placed on *his* ; which was entirely regulated by her conduct : when he perceived any inclination to levity or pride he was cold and reserved towards her ; when a perseverance in what was right and pleasing, all that could be delightful in man. Thus, with his manners for her guide, his looks for her reward, did Agnes, while abroad, remain uncontaminated by the advice and example of her mother and sisters. But on their return to England the charm was dissolved, or, at least, its power lessened :—she there learned, for the first time, that the man she had adored, whom she had looked up to as a being of a superior order, and whom to pass life with she had often fancied would brighten this world, and elevate her hopes of the next, was the prize of another ; and of *another* as sensible of his charms, though not as worthy to enjoy them as herself. Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe, the betrothed wife of De Meurville, felt for him a regard to which his for her bore not the faintest resemblance ; and when she could not behold him, was never so happy, as in writing to or hearing from her “dear Clifford.”

Become aware of this prior claim to his affections, Agnes endeavoured no longer to excite them ; and con-

scious that implicitly following his direction as she had once done, would be still owing his influence—which she ought to renounce—frequently acted in exact opposition to it: unwarily giving her lover the triumph of beholding the effort it cost her, and often undoing the whole by being brought at his entreaties to confess the greatness of the sacrifice she had made. Thus was Agnes situated with the Count de Meurville—systematically concealing, but involuntarily betraying her fondness, convinced that his presence was undermining her peace, but that separation from it would be endless, unutterable wo.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

"Yes Marianne, I freely grant  
The charm of Henry's eyes I see;  
But while I gaze I something want,  
I want those eyes to gaze on me."

OPIE.

THE time prescribed by etiquette had intervened since sending notes of invitation to the Hermitage and other places, when loud and incessant knocks at Abbeville proclaimed the arrival of the company invited. Last of all, according to their usual custom, came the Mandeville party, consisting of the Baronet, his wife, Miss Mandeville, and the Count de Meurville. Her Ladyship, dressed in white satin, with a magnificent turban on her head; her daughter in a richly sprigged muslin. Lady Mandeville entered, as she delighted to do, with a sort of bustle and sensation of her own creating. Looking very large in figure, and showily handsome in face, she volubly expressed her regret at being so late, her fears that they had caused delay of dinner, mingled with a customary measure of abuse on clocks, horses, and coachmen, and concluded with apologizing for Mrs. Damer, who she said had so tired



herself with walking in the morning that she could not come with them to dinner, but would, if able, join those invited for the evening. While her mother was thus excusing, declaiming, and declaring, Miss Mandeville, reserved and inanimate, looked like a drooping snow-drop by her side.

As the family at Abbeville, with whom Mr. Granville and Mr. Douglas were still stopping, had, within these few days, been further enlarged by the arrival of Lady Vignoles, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vigers, her husband, and three daughters, it had been thought unnecessary to invite more than the Mandevilles, the Boswells, and Torrens, to dinner ; but several additions were to appear in the evening. Lady Georgiana felt very much mortified at the indifference with which she was beheld by the Count de Meurville ; she, who had been accustomed to strike with admiration bordering on wonder, was annoyed indeed, not to meet one wandering glance from him, except the unavoidable one at introduction.

Her ladyship, with all the consciousness of beauty, smiled at such apathy, and was confirmed in an idea she had taken up from the moment of hearing that he was so uncommonly interesting, and Agnes Mandeville so more than usually attractive ; namely, that they were lovers. During dinner the conversation was lively and agreeable ; and the ladies, when retired to the drawing-room, were not reduced to such dulness as sometimes happens. There was, almost immediately, the agreeable interruption of coffee, and very soon afterwards the company invited for the evening arrived ; among whom were Mrs. Damer, Charlotte and Clermont Mandeville, Miss M'Dougal and her brother. When the gentlemen began to leave the dining-room, Lady Georgiana was requested to sit down to her harp ; but her Ladyship, who wished to defer commencing till the Count de Meurville entered, anxious to see whether he would add his solicitations to the rest, parried the request with all the coquetish airs of beauty, and declared

“ She could not, would not, durst not play ; ”

when, unaware of his being one of her auditors, her eyes suddenly met, and fell beneath the flashing glance of the Austrian.—The pride of Georgiana surmounting her vanity, she determined no longer to indulge either in presence of a man who she strongly suspected despised both, and she therefore at once sat down unaffectedly to the instrument.

The Count de Meurville, seeing nothing so repellingly arrogant and overbearingly spoilt, in a girl whom a single unintentional look had evidently recalled from levity and affectation to simplicity and dignity, determined to pay her, for the rest of the evening, the attention which some previous hints thrown out by Miss Mandeville had hitherto prevented him from doing.

Like King James, he

“ O’er the Syren hung,  
And beat the measure as she sung;  
Then pressing closer and more near,  
Whisper’d soft praises in her ear.”

Flattered by his manner, Lady Georgiana exerted all her powers of voice and execution; and they were so wonderfully great, as at times to leave her hearers in breathless amazement and admiration, unable to conceive that singing so magically varied, and playing so brilliantly striking, was effected by a form so fragile and fingers so delicate. After finishing the beautiful air of the “Castilian Maid,” her Ladyship requested Miss Mandeville, who had hitherto declined, to take the harp, and the latter consenting, on condition Lady Georgiana would accompany her on the piano, they performed together, “Now at moonlight fairy hour.” While music was thus engaging some, others were occupied by cards, conversation, or looking over the new books, pictures, &c. which lay scattered on different tables about the room.

Mr. Douglas and Charlotte Mandeville were involved in the intricacies of a French puzzle, which seemed to cause mutual embarrassment and amusement.

The two Baronets, Sir William and Sir Gerald, with

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Mrs. Torrens and the Countess of Malverton, made up a whist table : while Lady Vignoles, Mrs. Merton, Mr. Boswell, and Mr. Torrens, were engaged at casino, and Mr. Granville and Mrs. Damer were poring over a game of chess ; which the frequent though suppressed yawns of the former, and automaton-like silence of the latter, seemed to intimate very stupid.

"Miss Staples, observing Miss Mandeville looking at a veil which she had finished the day before, and now thrown with some fancy work on a table for display ; ventured to approach, with the hackneyed assurance, "That what she was regarding was not at all worth her notice."

"And why not ?" asked Miss Mandeville, in a chilling tone ; as she took up a flounce which was lying beside it.

"Oh, I did it in such a hurry," returned Miss Staples ; "and you, who work so delightfully yourself, must be so accustomed to seeing things well done."

"I never work," carelessly replied Miss Mandeville.

"You are grown idle then," timidly remarked Miss Staples.

"Not grown so, for I was at no time otherwise."

"I have a better memory," observed Miss Staples, with a smile, which seemed to expect a corresponding one.

"What does it recall ?" inquired Miss Mandeville, fixing her languid eyes on her companion.

"It recalls to my mind a beautiful scarf you worked before you went abroad," returned Miss Staples.

"Beautiful !" repeated Miss Mandeville, whom flattery even could not conciliate ; "don't profane terms," she added, as Mr. Granville who had just finished his game, came over to the table.

"Miss Mandeville," said the latter, "I am come to scold you for having been the means of losing me my game, which was at the beginning in a prosperous way."

"How was I unhappy enough to occasion its concluding differently," inquired Miss Mandeville, in her softest accents.

"Why, that angel voice of yours put all my ideas in confusion, till at last I could not distinguish a king from a rook, and Mrs. Damer cheek-mated me."

"I was not aware that I was doing so much mischief when singing," observed Miss Mandeville, "or I should have stopped; but what reparation can I make?" added she.

"Oh, sing me another song," cried he: "though one has already ruined me; I delight to hear you."

"Indeed," returned she, languidly, "there is enough going on without my joining."

"I would not," said Mr. Granville, taking her hand to lead her to the harp—"I would not hear a seraph choir unless your voice could join the rest."

"Not now, not now, I entreat you," remonstrated she; "I am tired; it's getting late."

"What!" said Mr. Vigers, coming towards them, "do I hear Miss Mandeville, the Parisian beauty, the London belle, the initiated votary of fashion, talk of its being late at eleven o'clock?"

"Late enough for the country, indeed, Sir," returned she.

"Well," said Mr. Vigers, "I am glad to see that there is a young lady so reasonable left in the world; but I hope you won't refuse to take a bit of chicken or sandwich," added he, as the supper tray was brought in.

"Oh, no," replied Miss Mandeville; "I am not one of your refusers, I assure you; I leave that for Mrs. Damer," she added, as the latter approached her.

"Is she a great one for negatives?" inquired Mr. Vigers; when he was called away by Mrs. Torrens.

"I am sure," said Miss Mandeville, turning to Mr. Granville, "you, who were sitting next her, must have discovered that."

"To tell you the truth, Miss Mandeville," whispered he, "I am at a loss to conceive how Mr. Damer could ever have been so happy as to prevail on her to say I will."

Miss Mandeville smiled; and Mrs. Damer just then

crossed the room to inform her that the carriage had been ordered, and that her mother thought she had better take something before she went away.

"I shall not take what I was shocked to see you take the other night, Caroline," returned Miss Mandeville.

"What was that?" asked Mrs. Damer.

"Nothing more nor less than filberts, which they were gothic enough to have in the evening at Mrs. Coningsby's, and you were countryfied enough to eat."

"They are not here to tempt you," observed Mrs. Damer, good-humouredly.

"They never tempt me," returned Miss Mandeville, with a withering glance, as she moved towards the supper tray.

"What shall I help you to?" cried Mr. Granville; "your sister is paying her devoirs to the anchovies, perhaps you will follow her example?"

"You might do worse, Madelina," cried Charlotte; "might not she, Sir Gerald?"

"I say, yes," replied the Baronet, dislocating a chicken.

"Well, suppose you give me a sandwich then," said Miss Mandeville, holding out a plate.

"Suppose I give you two," returned Mr. Granville, helping her.

"Oh, no! one is abundance, I assure you."

"Mrs. Boswell," cried Sir Gerald, "you promised to take a bit of chicken."

"It is so white and nice," said she, coming over, "I cannot resist, though I do not know what Dr. Grosvenor would say to me; he gave such strict injunctions about my eating nothing in the shape of supper."

"He shall hear nothing of it," cried Sir Gerald; "or, if he should, I'll take all the blame of enticing you to sin on myself."

"For the life of me," exclaimed Clermont Mandeville, helping himself to some cold pie, "I cannot think what makes these fat, comfortable physicians, starve all

the pretty women. There's not a lady you meet now, but has been put on prison fare by one or other of them."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Granville, "they consider the race already too formidable to need propagation."

"There's Grosvenor," continued young Mandeville, "who has fed himself within an inch of his life, and prescribed for his person till it is so large he can scarce walk, recommends every one else to fast, that he can get to give him a guinea for his advice."

"I suspect," said Mr. Torrens, "he never got a guinea of yours, Mr. Mandeville."

"No, nor ever will; I would not have a physician if I were dying."

"Nor a clergyman either, perhaps," said Charlotte.

"No, nor a clergyman either; for I shall be one, and would preach to myself."

"You would leave the world in a happy state of independence, Clermont," observed the Count de Meurville.

"Yes, I shall look on you all with contempt, and exclaim with the Cardinal,

'Vain pomp and glory of the world,  
I hate you.'"

"In the meantime," said Sir William, "we had better get home. The carriages are at the door, Lady Mandeville, do you return in the chariot or barouche?"

"Oh, I, De Meurville, and Madelin, agreed we would go back in the chariot. You and the rest may proceed in the coach."

This settled, they wished good night, and after an adjusting of cloaks and shawls, at which Miss Staples, Miss Darcliff, and some of the gentlemen presided, got into their carriages, and drove off; leaving the remainder of the company to follow their example, which they did immediately.

"Well, they are all off now," cried Mr. Granville, as he returned to the drawing-room, after handing Mrs.

Boswell, who was last, to her carriage; "and I see Alicia is pulling her chair towards the table, for a regular talk over."

"Oh, no," said the Countess, "only a skirmish; we will reserve the grand talk over till breakfast. I just want to hear Dorothea's opinion of the Mandevilles, whether she thinks them changed in any way."

"Indeed, I do," said Lady Vignoles; "though, to be sure, it is seven or eight years since I saw them, and only what one might expect. But I think Lady Mandeville twice as large as when I met her last; and Miss Mandeville looks like a shadow."

"In my life," exclaimed Mr. Granville, "I never saw a creature so altered as Miss Mandeville; why when I met her in London about this time three years, she was as different a girl as it is possible to conceive."

"She has lost all her colour," observed Mrs. Vigers, "and a great deal of her animation."

"She has lost every thing that was beautiful about her, I think," remarked Miss Staples.

"Not quite so bad," said the Countess; "She wore a sickly coloured flower in her hair, which made her complexion look to disadvantage. But her eyes are sweet, and her features and figure elegant."

"There is," observed Lady Vignoles, "a native ease in Miss Mandeville's manners which I admire."

There is, thought Miss Staples, a native insolence which I detest.

"Her sister Charlotte is the most lively creature I ever saw," observed Mr. Douglas, who had been flirting with her all the evening.

"More lively," said Mr. Granville, "than I suspect you would like a wife or sister of yours."

"Perhaps so," returned Douglas, musing; "but that manner has its fascination," he added in a quicker tone; "and will ensnare some rich old man, or thoughtless young spendthrift."

"And what will ensue in either case?" asked Lady Vignoles, winding up her watch.

"Why, if she marries the first, she'll break his heart ;

if the second, he'll break hers," replied Douglas, coolly.

And after a little more conversation, they retired to their respective apartments: Lady Georgiana thinking of the Count de Meurville, and of the happiness of Agnes, in having so fascinating a lover; for that he was her lover, the very manner in which he pronounced her name, convinced her. He spoke of drawings, and offered to lend her those of his which Agnes had copied, of songs, and pointed out those in her collection which Agnes sung. Leaving Georgiana convinced that all her attractions would be unavailing to conquer him, and also persuaded that the Count de Meurville was capable of inspiring something greater than a temporary fascination—of exciting sentiments more warm than admiration, more lasting than love.

## CHAPTER IX.

"And what is friendship but a name,  
A charm which lulls to sleep;  
A shade which follows wealth and fame,  
And leaves the wretch to weep!"

LADY Vignoles, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vigers, had been married young to a Baronet in the North of England; and residing there in complete retirement with her family, which consisted of three daughters and a son, her Ladyship, though amiable and informed to the highest degree, had lost (or never possessed) that polish of manner and elegance of appearance, which greater intercourse with the Fashionable world would have improved or implanted, and which distinguished her sister, the Countess of Malverton.

From living so secluded, Lady Vignoles had also contracted a carelessness with regard to dress, unfavourable to her appearance, and an adhesiveness to her own opinions in conversation, likely to impress a stranger



with less pleasing sentiments respecting her, than she deserved to inspire.

The three Miss Vignoles, who were about the ages of thirteen, fifteen, and seventeen, inherited, in a lesser degree, their mother's peculiarities ; and in the inattention of their manners, and neglect of their persons, formed a striking contrast to their cousin, Lady Georgiana Granville.

As the governess of these young ladies had not accompanied them into Surry, their mother devoted the entire of her mornings to them, not wishing that even on a visit they should neglect those habits of study and restriction to which they had been hitherto accustomed, and which the example of Lady Georgiana, who was unrestrained by any such observations, seemed peculiarly likely to undermine. Frequent were the interruptions of the latter lady, during their studies, to request Lady Vignoles would allow them to come out, driving or walking, with her and her mother. But not all the smiles and caresses of Georgiana could prevail on her aunt to depart from her systematic plans, of which futurity was to prove the superior advantages.

Wishing to do every thing that could be thought of for the entertainment of Lady Vignoles, during her stay at the Abbey, the Countess of Malverton and Mrs. Vigers perpetually promoted the acceptance of invitations abroad, and forming of parties at home ; and thinking if Lady Vignoles could be prevailed on to sacrifice a morning to amusement, and allow the girls to do the same, that going to Mount Morning, the place mentioned by the Mandevilles, might afford some, the Countess proposed, after speaking to her sister, to write to Miss Mandeville, and arrange a day for the excursion.— This she accordingly did, and received an answer from the latter, expressive of the pleasure they would feel in having their party increased by the addition of Lady Vignoles and her daughters ; and proposing, if no previous engagement interfered, that the family from Abbeville should breakfast next morning at the Hermitage, and proceed from thence to Colonel von Berg's.

Aware of the extreme lateness of the Mandevilles' hours, the Countess, and those who were to accompany her, breakfasted very quietly about ten at the Abbey, and did not set out for Hermitage till just eleven.—When they arrived there, they found the family assembled in the parlour, and after the customary salutations and inquiries, every one sat down to breakfast, which presented in its arrangements a happy accommodation to English and foreign tastes. Lady Malverton perceiving many absent at the table, whom she believed to be in the house, she could not avoid asking Lady Mandeville, who sat next to her, after them.

"Oh!" returned her Ladyship, whose face was encompassed in a blaze of Brussels lace, "there was never such a thing heard of in the annals of our proceedings, as all assembling together in the morning, though we might be in ever such a state of preservation; some breakfast, Sir William for one, before I am up, others will by and by in their own apartments, and a few perhaps may stroll down here in an hour or two, and order something."

The Countess smiled, but could not help inwardly thinking such independent proceedings gave a similitude to an hotel, derogatory to the dignity of a gentleman's house.

"Now, ladies," cried Colonel Blomberg, who was helping himself to some cold oyster-pie at a side-table, "I beg you will not raise your expectations of Mount Morning too high, for there is no room for it, I assure you. The grounds are well laid out; the house good; and the view from some of the windows beautiful: but, these I know, are not the things ladies look after: and of those they do in the shape of fine furniture, pictures, and china, there is a very indifferent assortment."

"It is a libel on ladies' taste to talk so," observed Mrs. Damer, as she made room for the Colonel, who returned to the table with his plate replenished with pie.

"Not at all," returned he, seating himself; "women are domestic creatures; and like best the things which contribute to domestic pleasures. What is the archi-

ture of a building, or the site on which it is raised, or the cold, heavy water, and great dull trees about it, said to constitute its beauty, to them?"

"Of great importance, indeed, Colonel Blomberg," said Lady Mandeville. "I will not allow women to be such concentrated, contracted-minded beings as to be indifferent to such things. They can when they choose it, enter with as much advantage into the modelling of a building, as into the arrangement of a drawing-room; are as alive to the beauty of a landscape, as to the brilliancy of a mirror."

"You say so, do you?" said the Colonel. "Well, you, as a woman, should know; but I always understood differently."

"You understood, Colonel?" repeated Sidney Mandeville; "why I should have thought you were sufficiently a man of gallantry to be enabled to speak from experiences."

"You thought him better acquainted with the tastes of the fair," said Mr. Fraser, smiling.

"I thought," said Sidney, seeing the subject was not disagreeable to the Colonel; "I thought his

' Only books  
Were woman's looks.'

Instead of that, ladies, he disdains all knowledge of your tastes and preferences."

"Cruel, ungallant Colonel Blomberg," exclaimed Charlotte Mandeville, "to interest himself so little about the sex he affects so much to admire."

"I verily believe," observed Clermont, "he would rather they admired him."

"It is not the way to induce them to do so," observed Miss Mandeville.

"Rather the contrary, I think," remarked Mrs. Damer.

"By my life," cried the Colonel, "it is rather too bad to have you all running down my reputation as a man of gallantry, when the thing I like best in the world is woman."

"Well, Sir," said Mr. Granville, who had come with the Abbeville party, "you will have an opportunity of redeeming your character with the ladies, by your attentions to-day."

"I fear not," replied he, mixing his tea in a tumbler of cold water. "They say reputation once lost, is lost for ever."

"A woman's reputation," observed Lady Malverton.

"Only a woman's? Lady Malverton, you give me comfort," said he. "And see," he added, looking at Agnes,

"Hope enchanting smiles, and waves her golden hair."

"I smile, Colonel Blomberg," said Agnes, "to hear you talk of hope who never felt despair."

"A truce to both," cried Sidney, starting up, "and if you have all done, let us ring for horses and carriages."

"What do you say, Countess?" inquired Lady Mandeville.

"Oh, I am ready," returned the Countess; "suppose we retire and adjust our dresses."

"Why you have only to put on your bonnets," cried the Colonel, "And I shall be most happy to tie them all."

"Very good indeed, Blomberg," exclaimed Sidney: "A very fair beginning, but I would advise the ladies to keep clear of you for fear you should kiss them."

"They seem to suspect me of some such design," observed the Colonel, "to judge from the haste of their decampment," he added, laughing at the ladies, who huddled promiscuously out of the room. "But," he continued, in a *sotto voce*, "what an angelic face that Lady Georgiana Granville has!"

"Do you think her beautiful?" drawled out Clermont.

"Beautiful! beyond any thing, beautiful!" returned the Colonel. "Why she'll turn the heads of all the men in London, when she goes there next winter."

"Not quite all, I hope," said Clermont, "for I in-

tend my little sister Agnes to do some mischief ; if Lady Georgiana turns heads, she must conquer hearts."

"In truth," cried Colonel Blomberg, "your sister being in London would make some difference ; Lady Georgiana would not have the field to herself then. But I had an idea you were to spend next winter in Edinburgh."

"We had thoughts of it," said Clermont, "having found it pleasant two or three seasons since. But I don't know, London, I believe, will be our quarters after all."

"You might be in worse," observed the Colonel. "But come, let us look at the horse we were speaking of last night (it is leading up and down the terrace) and leave De Meurville spelling the Courier."

"Not spelling it, indeed," said the Count de Meurville, throwing down the paper and rising to join them ; "it is very dull to-day. But that horse you allude to, Blomberg," continued he, "is my Arabian, and if you would like to buy her you shall have a bargain."

"I fancy it would be beyond my mark, notwithstanding," observed the Colonel ; "or else she is a pretty creature—I admire her greatly."

"Yes, she is a showy horse," returned the Count, as they went to the hall door, outside of which horses and carriages were paraded. "Here Kassian," cried the Count to his groom, "bring up Mocha."

"It is a nice animal, upon my word," said the Colonel, stroking it, "if it is not vicious, but these buff horses I know often are."

"They often are," returned the Count ; "but Mocha is not ; only just spirit enough about her, and no tricks or blemishes, that I ever discovered."

"How much did you give for her ?" inquired Colonel Blomberg.

"Oh, more than I should like to tell," replied the Count ; "but I would give her you for less, for I have associations connected with the animal which will prevent my ever liking her. I was riding her one day when abroad," continued the Count, "in company with

the best and dearest friend I ever had, when he was thrown from his horse and killed upon the spot."

"I don't wonder you should dislike such a *memento mori*," said the Colonel; "and I should be very likely to deprive you of it if I thought my weight would'n't be too great."

"Why you are not as tall as De Meurville," remarked Sidney.

"No, but I am much stouter."

"Height goes more against a horse than bulk," observed Mr. Granville, who had walked towards them.

"But both united would be too much for this animal, I am convinced," said the Colonel; "or else it is just the thing I should like."

"She seems intended for a lady's horse, I think," remarked Mr. Granville: "you should buy her, Colonel, and keep her for the future Mrs. Blomberg."

"I might as well advise my friend here, who wishes to part with her, to keep her for the future Countess de Meurville," observed Colonel Blomberg, with a smile.

"Mocha would be likely to be longer without a mistress in my case, than yours," said the Count de Meurville, with a sigh.

"Not if report speaks true, Count," returned the Colonel; "that, with every other title to glory, has long ago assigned you the conquest of a female heart."

"You may pluralize the matter, I believe," said Sidney with a meaning smile, as he and the rest of the gentlemen went to join the ladies who were assembling in the hall.

"Well," cried Mr. Mandeville, "who 's for the carriage now at the door? How many shall I have the honour of handing into the Abbeville barouche?—it is smaller than ours, keep in mind."

"More fashionable," remarked his mother.

"Less useful," observed the Countess.

"Suppose," said Lady Mandeville, turning to the latter, "that you, your daughter Madeline, and I, go in the other carriage." A.

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"Agreed," returned the Countess.

"While Lady Vignoles, her two young ladies, Mrs. Damer, and Agnes, go in this," continued her Ladyship.

The plan being settled, each party arranged themselves in their respective seats, while the gentlemen rode promiscuously before, beside, and behind: employed alternately in reconnoitring, chatting, and settling their plans, till they reached Mount Morning. For an account of their proceedings there, we shall refer our readers to a letter written by Mrs. Damer, a few days after.

*From Mrs. Damer to her Sister Miss Falconer.*

"MY DEAR ANNE,

"I should have written to you before, had inclination alone been necessary; but want of time has been my insurmountable barrier. I find myself, day after day, involved in the same series of engagements and dissipation, which I had hoped exclusively indulged in at the time of my marriage; and of the little pleasure of which, for a continuance, you, as having been here about that period, can form an idea. Too late in our hours at night to render it possible to rise till near twelve on the morrow, the morning, which at home used to be so long and pleasant, is here apparently short, and wasted in indolence, while the rest of the day is consumed in dressing, driving, and company.

This manner of passing my time would be less intolerable, did it promise to be of more transitory endurance; or could I perceive in Charles a distaste correspondent to my own, for such a thoughtless, useless life. But, on the contrary, the time of our departure from Hermitage is seldom mentioned by him, and that of our residence here frequently, as most delightful.

To him it may easily be delightful, in comparison to what it is to me, whose greatest source of complaint does not even arise from the circumstances I have mentioned, but from the unkindness of Lady Mandeville and her daughter, among whom I am of course

principally thrown for society, and whose powers of annoying exceed every thing you can suppose. Till I knew Miss Mandeville, I certainly little supposed how much maliciousness the female bosom is capable of harbouring, and how easily excited ; still less how effectually it may be concealed in blandishment of manner and address. She, however, has fully instructed me, and caused me to repent ever having flattered her vanity by a confession, which, in the commencement of our acquaintance, when she was appearing in all the ease of her manner, I, in the unfortunate *mauvaise honte* of mine, was induced to make ; namely, my wish to imitate and resemble her : for, from the moment of that confession, made when I believed her disposition as amiable as her person is prepossessing, she has assumed towards me a triumphant insolence and patronizing superiority, the most mortifying. Often, wounded by her unkindness, I retire weeping to my apartment, leaving her to inform my husband, when he enters the drawing-room, that his wife has just quitted it, dissolved in tears at some *trifling* observation, with regard to her manner, or suggestion for the improvement of her dress, which she was unhappy enough to venture on, knowing his wishes on the subject : irritated by such a report, Charles, who is warm in his temper, flies up to me, and in an annoyed tone reproaches me for the little command I possess over myself, thinks I must be aware that any thing Miss Mandeville notices to me, is for my advantage, and ought so to be appreciated. On one occasion, indeed, he was unkind enough to insinuate, that my not receiving her advice as I ought, intimated a pride, and self-sufficiency, which it was my duty to overcome.

Roused by a reproach so unjust, I could not avoid exclaiming, "Oh, Charles ! was any advice or remonstrance from your lips ever despised or disregarded by me ? let *you* only admonish me— let *you* only correct me, and you shall have no reason to complain of disobedience ; but let not an unfeeling, arrogant girl assume that power." Instead of being flattered or conciliated by my exclusive preference to himself, he appeared only surprised and displeased at my allusion



to Madeline : inquiring what she had done to deserve the epithets I bestowed on her : that it was at his request she had been kind enough to give me any hints with regard to my dress and manner, which her superior acquaintance with the etiquette of fashion enabled her to do ; and without allowing myself to reflect from whom the advice would be most agreeable, I should gratefully have received it from the person best qualified to impart it.

"From her—from any one, would I receive it," cried I, "who I thought had my good at heart ; but Miss Mandeville, I am sure, has not ; and far from wishing me to appear to advantage, is only desirous of the contrary."

My husband was for a moment silenced ; but presently recovering, asked what reason I had to suppose so ? —that Madeline had always expressed herself in the most affectionate terms to him regarding me, and as anxious that I should look well in every respect.

To you, thought I, she may very probably make such professions ; to me, she proves their fallacy. But not wishing to prolong a difference, into which I had been betrayed by the warmth of my feelings, and which I was aware would only end in incredulity on his part, and consequently, redoubled mortification on mine, I was silent ; and he proceeded to declare that, though it gave him pain to say so, he could not but attribute my dislike to his cousin to pique at having been spoken to by her : "As if," he added, "any reproach or disgrace could be attached to not being intimate with those trifling observances, which the retired life you have led put it out of your power to be acquainted with,—the dissipated one she has, equally out of her's not to be." And this affair ended like some others of the same kind, in an affected reconciliation between me and Miss Mandeville ; who, mistress, I believe, of every art of dissimulation, expressed such sorrow before Charles at any thing like a misunderstanding having arisen between us, that he thought me, I am sure, of an unforgiving disposition, when I but coldly held out my hand to meet the

one she so warmly proffered ; but her touch felt to me as it were that of the torpedo ; and of the insincerity of any of her expressions of friendship, not a day passes without giving me proof.

Charlotte Mandeville, equally bitter in her dislike to me, does not resort to dissimulation to conceal it, and will create a laugh against me as readily in my presence as absence, while Arabella, unprepossessing and unnoticed in any way, is, I believe, indifferent to me : but Agnes, either from better policy or better nature, plays consoling angel to the wounds which others inflict ; and often have her sweet accents of compassion, whether dictated by the wishes of De Meurville, whom I can easily see she studies at times to please, or the impulses of her own yet unvitiated heart, recalled me to society I had left dispirited and unhappy.

But I am filling my paper in relating my grievances, instead of describing, as I intended at sitting down, a rural excursion we made the other day, and which as my letter goes in a frank, I may yet be enabled to add an account of. It was undertaken to view a house and grounds at some little distance from here, belonging to Colonel Blomberg, whom you may recollect having seen when at the Hermitage, and who is a great admirer of Agnes. Besides our own party, which is never inconsiderable, we had an addition from Abbeville, of the Countess of Malverton, her sister, Lady Vignoles, and brother-in-law, Mr. Granville, with Lady Georgiana, and two of the Miss Vignoles's ; all of whom breakfasted with us on the day of our excursion, and proceeded in company with us to Mount Morning, which we reached about three o'clock, and found to exceed our expectation in every respect. The house is large and admirably situated ; the grounds beautiful and tastefully disposed. An elegant collation was prepared in the dining-room, which the Colonel wished us to partake of immediately after our arrival, but which we declined touching till we had looked a little about us. Agreeably to our inclinations, therefore, we began a survey of the mansion, which, *en passant*, fell into the hands of its

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present possessor by the death of his brother, a man who had amassed an immense fortune in India, and spared no expense on this place, which was his constant residence.

Though the Colonel, among several other things, had deprecated his collection of pictures, there was a gallery filled with very fine ones; not only of his family, but of many illustrious personages in history; among whom, Henrietta, Queen of England, as she appeared in her first interview with Charles, and Anne Bullen, in character of maid of honour to Queen Catharine, shone conspicuous in beauty, and were thought by some of our party to resemble Lady Georgiana Granville and Agnes Mandeville. Between the former and Lady Georgiana I saw little likeness; the dark piquant eyes of the one possessing none of the splendid characteristics of the other; but between Anne Bullen and Agnes, I saw much; there danced in her eyes, there played about her mouth, there vibrated—it would almost seem through her very veins—the same joyous, triumphant, exulting, yet courtly, controllable, pardonable consciousness, of being an object all lovely and beloved. I could have stood looking at her for ever; and while I was doing so, the Count de Meurville came over, and asked me what I thought of the picture. “Oh, it’s beautiful!” said I, “and the image of Agnes Mandeville.”

“You are very generous,” said he, “to allow so much to one, whom some in your place might consider as a rival.”

“I never could be so vain as to consider Agnes Mandeville in that light,” said I; “her superiority in beauty is too decided.”

“And yet experience has proved,” returned he, smiling, “that all the world were not of that opinion. Her cousin saw in you superior charms.”

“More attainable ones, probably,” said I; “but superior would have been impossible.”

The Count de Meurville shook his head. “Well, if you are determined to be so humble, said he, “I will:

not contradict you ; but I know Agnes thinks very differently both of herself and you."

"It may be so," said I; and as I spoke we turned into the library, where Agnes, the charming Agnes, and many others were collected. She was standing at an open window with Lord Yalbroke; and whatever had been the subject of their conversation, it had caused in her countenance a most brilliant glow, and in his Lordship's an expression of seriousness, such as I had never before seen it wear. Evidently afraid of meeting the Count de Meurville's eyes, though I do not think they were at that moment seeking her's, Agnes began to pull the flowering shrubs, which crept in at the window, most unmercifully; and when he approached her, which he did as soon as Lord Yalbroke had quitted the room, confirmed me by her manner towards him, in an opinion I have long ago taken up, of their being attached to each other. It was of that timid encouraging description, which a woman only adopts towards a man whom she loves; and must have put to flight any fears her conference with Lord Yalbroke might have occasioned him. After conversing together some time, they began to look at different books which were scattered about; and I observed him point out to her some lines in one, which curiosity afterwards induced me to search for, and I found to be a quotation from Scott's beautiful stanzas, addressed to Agnes in the "Tales of my Landlord."

"What conquest o'er each erring thought  
Of that fierce realm has Agnes wrought!  
Mine ireful mood her sweetness tamed,  
And soothed each wound which pride inflamed."

Observing me noticing the lines, and suspecting probably the motive which induced me, Agnes asked me if they were not very pretty? that De Meurville had just pointed them out to her as addressed to one of her name.

"They are very pretty," said I; "and probably," I added, in a lower tone, "he meant them as very appropriate."

"He? the writer, you mean, I suppose," said she, quickly. But her eyes sank beneath the meaning glance of mine as she added, "I am one of the very few who have not read this tale."

"No! I mean De Meurville," returned I.

"Do you suppose," said she, smiling and looking out of the window, as if at some far distant object—"Do you suppose

'His ireful mood my sweetness tamed?'

"Something of the kind," observed I: when our attention was called to some medals Colonel Blomberg was exhibiting, and which were very curious. After examining them, we descended to the dining-room to refresh ourselves, and from thence took a stroll about the grounds; the heat, which had been oppressive in the morning, having greatly subsided.

"One would think," said Mr. Granville, as some of us were standing in a group together; "one would think a lady had arranged these pleasure grounds, they are so well disposed."

"A lady's taste influenced their arrangement," observed Colonel Blomberg.

"Ah, ah! Colonel," said the gentlemen, with a general laugh, "we thought there was a lady in the case."

"The next thing to hear," observed Miss Mandeville, "will be that she is a pretty lady."

"Then that you won't hear, Miss Mandeville," said the Colonel, "for she is a very plain lady."

"Young, perhaps?" remarked Lady Vignoles.

"Rather the contrary," replied Colonel Blomberg.

"Fascinating, without doubt?" said the Countess of Malverton.

"No, blunt and cross to all mankind:—my aunt, in short."

"It must have been in an auspicious moment," observed the Count de Meurville, "you got her to sketch the plan for this, then."

"I was thinking," said Mr. Granville, "what bribery he could have used to induce her."

"Oh, she is not so tough as all that!" cried the Colonel. "She is a woman, and therefore must be wooed; she is a woman, and therefore may be won. But, after all, doing a thing of this kind was gratifying to her vanity. She was aware that whenever these grounds were admired, the name of their planner would be mentioned."

"She had taste, at any rate," observed Lady Mandeville; "indeed, it seems a characteristic of the family," her Ladyship politely added.

"How I envy you your future aunt!" said Sidney, aside to his sister Agnes; "it will be so pleasant to have a person of that kind related to one; and delivering lectures from morning till night on extravagance, and such like."

"She will never have it in her power to lecture me," replied Agnes, haughtily turning away.

After Colonel Blomberg had shown us the gardens and prettiest parts of his estate, the Countess of Malverton and Lady Mandeville mutually proposed preparing for our return: the latter declaring that Sir William must not be kept too long waiting for his dinner; the former, that her mother would expect them by eight, or so.

Accordingly, the carriages and horses were summoned, and each party, after expressions of pleasure and satisfaction, set out for their respective homes. Colonel Blomberg accompanied us back to Hermitage. And now, my dear Anne, with love to all at home, and wishing that I was there, I must conclude this long letter. Believe me, ever yours, most affectionately,

CAROLINE DAMER.

Hermitage.

P. S. The Abbeville family dine here to-morrow. I long to see Lady Vignoles again; she is a delightful woman, and seems to me a little to resemble our dear mother."

## CHAPTER X.

"Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,  
 They talk'd, they laugh'd, they danced, and sung;  
 And proud of health, of freedom vain,  
 Dream'd not of sorrow, care, and pain.

PRINCESS AMELIA.

THE family from Abbeville, as the postscript of Mrs. Damer's letter mentioned, were all invited to dine at Hermitage a few days after the Mount Morning excursion. And Mr. and Mrs. Vigers, Sir Gerald and Lady Vignoles, with the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana Granville, went as dinner guests: while the three Miss Vignoles, their mother preferring, came in the evening.

The hour notified for dinner had been six o'clock, and Mr. Vigers, who was a great stickler for punctuality, insisted on his family not being later than a quarter past, and about that time they were ushered into the drawing-room at Hermitage, after the usual etceteras of unshawling and announcing; forming a more conspicuous group by their number than was agreeable to the fastidious mind of the Countess; who, with her daughter, would have preferred coming in the evening, had not the previously reiterated entreaties of Lady Mandeville for them all to dine, silenced her objections.

The room, which was very large, and furnished with such resemblance to an upholsterer's as to render it difficult to cross, was filled with company; some of them grouped at windows, which were thrown open to admit the sweetness of a summer afternoon, others differently disposed; conspicuous in ease and animation appeared Lady Mandeville, in beauty and blandishments her daughters. Near the former was seated Lady Malverton, and till dinner was announced conversation did

not languish between them. Lady Mandeville was amusing the Countess, by anticipating the surprise which, she took it for granted, the latter would feel at the unfashionable appearance of their dinner table : "so unlike," her Ladyship added, "the elegance which characterizes your own. But the fact is, Lady Malverton, that Sir William's antiquated notions of comfort and hospitality, which consists he thinks in crowding the sides of his table with guests, and the surface with dishes, are not to be combated ; and while he allows me license on points more connected with my own and the girls' pleasures, I do not wish entirely to oppose his predilections, however at variance with my taste."

Lady Malverton, herself a wife, could of course fully enter into the necessity of conceding trivial points to ensure important ones ; and entering the dining-room, to which she was conducted by Sir William, gave her an opportunity of judging of the extent of the sacrifices Lady Mandeville had made.

The table, groaning under piles of edibles, might be surfeiting to a modern eye ; but the glittering dishes which bore them redeemed their appearance :—and the size of the party which surrounded the table, might have caused doubts of all being enabled to meet attention, had not the number of servants in waiting destroyed the idea. So that, if things were on a more extensive plan than was quite consistent with fashionable limitation, there was every thing correspondent, and abundance of eating was not to stand proxy, as is sometimes the case, for necessary utensils ; or enjoyment of society, for deficiency of comfort. Soup figured at top and bottom ; that at the former helped by Sir William, that at the latter by his eldest son.

"I recommend this brown soup," said Sidney ; "you had better let me send you a little, Lady Vignoles. The white is cold ; I have just been helped to some of it, and sent it away."

"Oh ! I prefer any thing cool this warm weather," returned Lady Vignoles.



"Any thing cool but soup and coffee," observed the Count de Meurville.

"What sort of soup do they turn out in France?" inquired Mr. Blandford, a gentleman seated near the lower end of the table, "for I am going there next week, and want to know whether I shall prepare portable."

"Oh, the French would be very much offended by your taking that precaution," said every one, "for they reckon their soups the best in the world."

"Very probably, but it is not what they reckon them, but what every one else does, I want to know."

"Why it entirely depends on taste," observed Lady Mandeville. "Some account them delightful, others the contrary; with regard to ourselves, we had an English establishment when abroad, and every thing dressed and done à *L'Anglaise*."

"As you value the appearance of your physiognomy," said Clermont, "never come in contact with *soup maigre*. It is the most distorting thing you can imagine."

"Oh, shocking!" observed Miss Mandeville.

"Well, now," said Mr. Mason, a gentleman sitting opposite, "I think a foreigner to taste our fat mutton broth would pronounce it ridiculous in us to depreciate any thing."

"You must not speak disrespectfully of mutton broth," cried an old gentleman busily engaged with his dinner; "it is one of the best things in the world."

"All depends on the making," remarked Lady Vignoles.

"Oh, all!" said Mrs. Boswell, "for I, delicate and fastidious as I am, have been induced to take some, by its being made very nice. Not your fat mutton broth, Mr. Mason," added she, looking down the table, and requesting the old gentleman to help her to some curry.

"Mrs. Boswell," cried Lady Mandeville, "I don't like to see you begin with corner-dishes. Take, I beg, a little fish, there is turbot opposite Sir William; and salmon, my son is helping."

"Oh no! thank you, Lady Mandeville," returned

she, "I know your corner dishes to be as good as the others, and am not afraid to venture on them. At some places they don't care what they are composed of."

"No; they are often but untempting affairs," said Mrs. Vigers.

"To be sure," continued she, "such messes as are sometimes made up! I was dining the other day at a table, where one might have expected better things; and a gentleman who was with me determined on tasting all the black and white compositions, which we observed made it out; and they were all so strong and bad, he assured me he was ready to hang his curiosity."

"I think I shall not have reason to repent of my choice," said Mr. Vigers, "if I solicit to be helped to some of that hashed calf's-head, Sir William is beginning to dispense."

"And I," said Mrs. Boswell, "must trouble Mr. Torrens for a little more rice; I am half an Indian," she playfully added, "I am so fond of rice."

"I, too," observed the Countess, "should endeavour to become so; for I may soon probably be in the way of meeting it more than any thing else."

"No fear of your going to the East Indies, is there?" said the Count de Meurville.

"Oh, every fear," returned her Ladyship.

"I should say *hope*, were I you," said Mrs. Damer, smiling.

"Good gracious! Caroline," exclaimed Charlotte Mandeville, "what pleasure do you think Lady Malverton could enjoy there?"

"Why she will be as a vice-queen," said Mrs. Damer, smiling, "and live in luxury and distinction that will atone for the unpleasantness of the climate."

"The wealth of the Indies would not do that," observed Miss Mandeville, contemptuously.

"You have been in India, have you not Mr. Mason?" inquired Lady Mandeville.

"Oh, yes," returned he, "I have experienced all the pageantry of the East, and fancy, if Mrs. Damer

had, she would think it dearly purchased by being necessitated to live in such a country."

"I should think, for my part," said Miss Mandeville, "all its luxuries dearly purchased by the necessity of enjoying them at a distance from my country and connexions, were the climate agreeable, instead of the contrary."

"But, Miss Mandeville," cried the Earl of Coral-court, an old nobleman, who favoured one of the party, and for whose edification this amiable speech was partly made, "your going abroad might be occasioned by forming a connexion dearer than any you left behind."

Miss Mandeville smiled, and declared she did not think she should be ever induced to form a connexion entailing so great a sacrifice.

Her mother laughed, as she said, at the comfort they were all giving the Countess of Malverton. But the latter declared it impossible for any one to give her less pleasing ideas on the subject of India than she entertained herself.

As the dessert was placing on the table, a servant whispered to Agnes that the Misses Vignoles were in the drawing-room, and she gave a look at De Meurville, as much as to inquire whether she should go to them.

"You had better take a little fruit first," said he, putting some mulberries on her plate.

"I think I should join them," observed she; and as she spoke, Lady Mandeville called out, "Agnes, my love, the Misses Vignoles are come; go and bring them in here; they may like to take something after their drive."

Lady Vignoles interrupted the mandate with a request that Miss Mandeville might not stir till they all moved, for that her girls would find entertainment for themselves in the drawing-room. But Agnes had already gone—she found the Misses Vignoles very demurely seated when she entered, and after a few expressions of fear at having come too early, and assurances to the contrary, and entreaties to come to the dining-room, and resistance on the plea of its being too awful an encoun-

ter, they all fell into total silence; for the Misses Vignoles, shy in the extreme, had seldom the sound of their voices elicited but by necessity, and Agnes was at a loss what topic to start, till the Mount Morning excursion occurred to her, when she asked them how they had enjoyed themselves that day?

"Oh, excessively," was the general reply.

"But now I think of it," said Agnes, "one of you was not of the party; how did that happen?"

"No, Dora had a cold," replied Miss Vignoles, looking at her youngest sister.

"Poor Dora!" exclaimed Agnes; "I hope nothing will interfere to prevent her joining some other party."

And again a silence ensued, broken by Miss Vignoles remarking on the excellence of Colonel Blomberg's library.

"I suspect you fond of reading," said Agnes, "by the library having made an impression on you. Am I right?"

"Yes, I delight in it," returned Miss Vignoles.

"And to which style of reading do you give the preference?"

"To history and travels, I think," said Miss Vignoles, her countenance lightening up.

"And does Miss Harriet prefer the same?" inquired Agnes, fancying she traced something a little more arch in her countenance than her sister's.

"No, she likes biography and poetry," said Miss Vignoles, answering for her sister.

Agnes smiled. "And do any of you draw?" was her next interrogation.

"No," they none of them drew. But they played, "played on the piano, at least," Miss Vignoles said, glancing at a splendid harp in the room, on which she presently inquired whether Agnes performed, and, being answered in the affirmative, urged her to favour them with something.

"I'll play with the greatest pleasure," said Agnes, "but it won't be a novelty to you, for you must have

the opportunity of hearing Lady Georgiana very often."

"You are mistaken," observed Miss Vignoles; "I don't think I have heard my cousin play more than twice, since I came to Abbeville. Her harp would be perpetually out of tune, if it were not for my aunt, who touches it frequently and delightfully."

"Your cousin's too pretty to be made to do any thing she does not like," said Agnes, smiling.

"So my aunt seems to think," observed Miss Harriet, "for she lets her have her own way in every thing, and mamma's always scolding her about it."

"Mamma does not spoil any of you, I suppose," remarked Agnes.

"No, she does better," said Miss Vignoles sensibly. And the harp began to vibrate to the voice of Agnes, as she sweetly warbled

"Slowly wears the day, love."

At the conclusion of which they were joined by the ladies from the dining-room, who entered apparently amused by some recent incident.

"Such a thoughtless thing," said Mrs. Boswell, "for me to speak of a man being an old fool who married at sixty, when there was Lord Coralcourt, who's that if he is a day, just opposite to me, and talked of for some young girl, as every one knows: I declare I thought I should have sunk under the table."

"And I," said Miss Mandeville, "blushed red, as the carnations in my hair; for Lord Coralcourt seeing you and me laugh, thought it, I am sure, a concerted thing, and stared at us both unmercifully."

"Oh, your blushes are so beautiful!" returned Mrs. Boswell, "that they might well attract a man's attention; but looking at me was only to mark well the woman who had insinuated him a fool. But how are the Misses Vignoles?" added she, approaching them, and shaking hands with each alternately; "why, they are grown such big girls, Lady Vignoles, you should pass them off as your sisters."

Lady Vignoles laughed.

"You may laugh," said Mrs. Boswell, taking an image from the chimney-piece to examine it; "but I assure you, the gentleman who was sitting on my left side at dinner, paid you so many compliments on your appearance, that I, seeing Sir Gerald was at a good distance, and not likely to claim you by any unlucky title, passed you off for a rich young widow without any family, and one whom it would be advisable for him, as a younger son, to pay his addresses to, at the first convenient opportunity.

"You were very obliging," said Lady Vignoles; "but I fear this evening will break the delusion."

"Ah, that's the thing," cried Mrs. Boswell; you'll appear a matronly kind of personage surrounded with these young ladies, and Mr. Deptford will call me to account for imposing on him; but I know you of old, Lady Vignoles: a terrible one for carrying on a deception; what we call a tell-truth."

"Well, you must forgive it, for 'Auld lang syne,' then," said her ladyship, and she laughed.

Miss Mandeville now proposed to Lady Georgiana to take a stroll out, and this giving the idea to the rest, they most of them procured shawls and bonnets to follow their example.

"Where shall we go?" said Lady Georgiana, as she took the arm of Miss Mandeville.

"To the garden, perhaps," returned her companion; "to what we call the *ladies'* garden, where no gentlemen are permitted to enter; and where you may ramble from morning till night, pulling fruit, flowers, and doing all sorts of mischief, without being haunted by a cross gardener, or started at by stupid labourers suspending their work."

"Oh, it must be a phoenix of a garden," said Lady Georgiana, "for every one I was ever in yet, has the attendant nuisances you mention."

"Well, it is then," returned Miss Mandeville; "as seeing the key in the door is a proof. When you wish to get into the generality of gardens, you almost always

find that the key has been missing that day: or if not, that the gardener took it off in his pocket, (about half-an-hour before;) or at least it is in the *lock*, the latter is too hard to be turned."

"You draw a lively and correct picture," said Lady Georgiana, pulling a flower. "But," added she quickly, "you must show me, Miss Mandeville, that charming little cottage you were telling me about, the day we were at Mount Morning."

"Oh, by all manner of means," returned her companion with vivacity. "Well, walk to the upper-end of the garden, and then through a door at the back of the summer-house, into the shrubbery which leads to it."

They did as Miss Mandeville said, and found themselves in a dark shrubbery, down which they proceeded, till they came opposite a little rustic gate, placed at one side, which, on opening it and following the path presented to view, led by a devious winding to a beautiful cottage overgrown with honeysuckles and roses.

"How pretty!" exclaimed Lady Georgiana, "What a delightful fragrance from the flowers! Why, it is just like a French cottage. Dear! I know a young lady who would be delighted with it—who would be wild to live in it."

"I know a young lady," said Miss Mandeville archly, "who has been delighted with it; who is wild to live in it." And Miss McDougal was pronounced by the lips of each at the same moment.

"Such raptures as she was in," continued Miss Mandeville, "with the whole concern. We had her here for two or three days, about the time this cottage was fitting up; and she was in it from morning till night, assisting with her taste and ingenuity."

"She is a nice girl," observed Lady Georgiana.

"Oh, yes!" returned Miss Mandeville; "the kind of girl one likes to have on a visit. One who understands a little of every thing, and enters into any thing that's going on. Pretty enough to do you credit; yet not so pretty as to attract all the men, which it is not

pleasant for a girl, who is your inferior in rank and pretensions, to have the power of doing."

"She is going to be married," observed Lady Georgiana, "to a Mr. Cawdor; and wants me to compassionate her for it."

"Well, and don't you?" inquired Miss Mandeville, with an appealing glance. "Don't you think it a thousand pities, that a girl like Miss M'Dougal, with a pleasing person, excellent disposition, and a good fortune, should be thrown away upon a boor incapable of appreciating her. For my own part, I never think of poor Juliet's case, without applying to it, though not quite *à propos*, Crabbe's lines of

'Art thou, sweet maid, a ploughman's wants to share,  
'To dread his insult, to partake his care?'"

"Is he really so bad?" said Lady Georgiana. "Well, I never saw him to be enabled to judge myself; and did not think it fair to take a prejudice against him, merely on Juliet's report; who has ideal standards of perfection running in her head, that prevent her judging fairly of realities."

Miss Mandeville smiled intelligently.—"Come," said she, "I must introduce you to the extent of this edifice. Shall I first show you the upper department?" Lady Georgiana agreed, and followed her friend up a few stairs. "This," said the latter, opening a door on the right-hand, "is furnished, as you may perceive, in somewhat a curious manner; with as many geraniums and myrtles as we can persuade Moses, our obstinate old gardener, the green-house can do without; and a few books, the refuse of our overgrown library."

"And a parrot," cried Lady Georgiana quickly, being startled by hearing a voice unlike her own or her companion's.

"Yes, Madame's nasty parrot," returned Miss Mandeville, putting her fingers through the bars of the cage, and calling him by his name.

"He takes your fingers for white sugar," said Lady



Georgiana, laughing at the bird as he made a snap at them.

"No, Poll knows them too well to take them for any thing so sweet," returned her companion carelessly, as she crossed the room to let down a window which had been left open, and through which the fragrance of a lilac tree that grew close outside came delightfully softened. "But come," added she, "we will proceed in our survey. This room," opening the door of one opposite to that they had been in, "contains our stores, from which we can supply ourselves with such food as fruit, vegetables, &c. whenever we are disposed. And in the apartment under it, which, if you'll be good enough to come down again, I'll show you, is collected every necessary utensil for eating and drinking."

Lady Georgiana smiled, wondered, and was all admiration at the arrangement of every thing.

"And now," said Miss Mandeville, opening another door, "I must introduce you to our most important room—the one in which we read, draw, talk, and do every thing that is delightful."

It was indeed the *bijou* of the whole; here was collected every thing that fancy could form, or taste execute.

"I see you admit gentlemen here?" observed Lady Georgiana, taking a flute from the table, where books, works, and drawing, lay in elegant confusion.

"Yes, agreeable ones," returned her companion; "we'd admit, for instance, Mr. Granville and Mr. Douglas; both of whom, you must know, I'm half in love with; I think they are delightful men, so much life about them. They are great favourites of mine, I assure you, and so you may tell them when you see them."

"They will be the happiest men in England," said Lady Georgiana, seating herself, and looking around the room; "but who plays on this flute?" added she, still retaining it.

"Why, my brother Clermont persuades us he does," returned Miss Mandeville, "and affords us high amuse-

ment by the wretched harmony he produces. The Count de Meurville plays on the guitar, and very well. But he does every thing well, I think," she added, removing a sheet of paper which concealed a beautifully coloured drawing: "here is a proof he paints well, at least," presenting a picture to Lady Georgiana of a woodman on a frosty morning. "Is it not natural?"

"Oh, natural!—to the life!" exclaimed Lady Georgiana: "was it from a copy he did it? or how could he conceive that chilly figure, surrounded with snow, and boughs whitened by frost, in this warm weather."

"I believe it is an original," returned Miss Mandeville; "but you must not conceive the coldness of *his subject* an emblem of that of his *imagination*."

"Rather the contrary," observed Lady Georgiana; "being able to portray objects with nothing around to assist him in the delineation, would impress me with an idea of its vividness."

"He is a delightful man," said Miss Mandeville, sitting down as she spoke; "and I may say so without creating suspicion, for he is almost as much as a married man, namely, a betrothed one; and I feel towards him as towards my brothers; only, *entre nous*, more affectionately, for he makes himself more agreeable than any of them. Indeed, I often say to their faces I would take him as a representative of the three, were it in my power, at least of Sidney and Clermont. I don't know what poor Adrian may be now, for I have not seen him these three or four years: but he used to be a sad inattentive fellow."

"You will miss the Count de Meurville whenever he leaves you," observed Lady Georgiana.

"Oh, indeed we shall!" returned her companion; "but I am in hopes it will not be for some time yet; he thinks it probable, circumstances may enable him to remain for about a year in England, or at least till next spring; and if so, he will reside here till we go to London; and there, though he may not actually live with us, we shall see him constantly."

"It will make it very agreeable to you," said Lady Georgiana.

"What I admire in De Meurville," continued Miss Mandeville—"and what, from only having heard him spoken of before I saw him, as the favourite of an Emperor, the beloved of an highly endowed and independent woman, and as an all-accomplished man, I had little expected to find—is his total disregard of self, rendered more remarkable by his attention to others; to women, in particular. I have seen men more flattering in their manner; but I never saw a man who, without adopting that heartless, universal attention, which only intimates an incapability of limitation, or extent, is so generally polite as De Meurville."

"He is one of the kind of men I should admire then, I think," said Lady Georgiana, "if I came to know him well: I like a man who has shades in his attentions; who gives an idea that he could be very different in his manners, with the woman he loves, for instance, to what he would be with any woman in the world besides."

"Well, if any one gives you an idea that he could be so," returned Miss Mandeville, "the Count de Meurville is *that* man; and whatever I might *once* have done, I no longer wonder at the extravagant affection which every report has insinuated Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe to feel for him; thinking him, as I now do, a young man who would justify any girl's attachment. But suppose," added she, rising quickly, "we go back to the house; they will conceive us lost."

Lady Georgiana agreed, and they set out on their return.

"I had intended to ask you," said her Ladyship, as she took the arm of her friend, "only we had so many things to say to each other, I forgot it, how you like your new relation?"

"Mrs. Damer you mean, I presume," said Miss Mandeville; "oh, very well; she's a good creature, but I should like her better if she liked us better, and was a little more amenable to advice."

"She is not very partial to the latter then, I infer," returned Lady Georgiana. "How have you discovered it?"

"By her taking ill the most trifling remark or hint that can be made relative to her dress and manner, &c."

"One would not suspect it," said Lady Georgiana.

"No," returned Miss Mandeville, "and I don't still mean to say that she is ill-tempered, or any thing of that kind; but she has a foolish pride, or something or other about her which is mortified by the slightest observation; indeed, I lament it for her own sake," added Miss Mandeville, "for it will prevent her making friends, such friends at least as might be useful to her, by taking the liberty of reproving and advising her."

"She gives me the idea," observed Lady Georgiana, "of one to whom dress and company is rather a novelty."

"Just so," said Miss Mandeville, delighted to meet with one who entered into the thing: "till Caroline married my cousin, she never either mixed in such good company, or possessed such good clothes as she has since; and is therefore as much at a loss how to behave in the *one*, as to put on the *other*, which no one can wonder or be displeased at; we only regret that she will not allow herself to be improved."

When the young ladies returned to the house, they went up to Miss Mandeville's room, to adjust their appearance; and the first thing that struck their eye on entering it, was the bed strewed with coloured dresses, sashes, and flowers.

"Ah, I see," said Miss Mandeville, "my mother has been exhibiting my foreign finery; I wish she had ordered it to be put up when she had done with it; I must ring for Barnet to do so:" and as she spoke she pulled the bell.

"They seem very beautiful things," remarked Lady Georgiana; holding up a dress, to which was attached a streaming sash.

"Yes, we are tolerably off in the dress way now, as my father knows to his cost," said Miss Mandeville, laughing; "but don't mind looking at these now,"

added she, taking the gown from Georgiana, and handing it to a young woman who then entered, to fold up; "for we intend," continued she, as they left her apartment for the drawing-room, "to request your and your mother's company for several days here soon, and then, if you are good enough to come, you will have an opportunity of seeing all our curiosities." Lady Georgiana smiled, and they entered the drawing-room, into which the footman had just taken a letter, or what had the appearance of one.

"What the plague can this be!" cried Sidney, opening it; "who left it?"

"A man on horseback, Sir," replied the servant.

And in the curiosity which the late arrival of the epistle occasioned, and the noise and talk of the room, the entrance of Lady Georgiana and her companion was unheeded.

"Why, nothing more or less than a ball," cried Sidney; "a ball at C——, for which they seem to expect me to take half a hundred tickets: I am sure they have sent us nearly as many."

"When is it to be?" cried every one.

"This day week, I believe," returned Sidney, looking at one card and throwing another to Lady Malverton.

"I hope I am not put down as a patroness," said the Countess as she took it, "for when they wrote to me about the thing some time ago, I told them I would rather not."

"Indeed, you are in for it, Lady Malverton," said Sidney; "and you, Ma'am," looking at his mother, "are another; and Lady Ramsay, and the Honourable Mrs. Pierrepont; and the more than Honourable,—the lovely, beautiful, and bewitching,"—inserted Sidney, previous to pronouncing the name of "Mrs. Deloraine."

"They have enough, at any rate," observed Mrs. Torrens and Mrs. Boswell at the same moment, each a little annoyed at not being included.

"And you are to be a steward, Sidney," said the

Count de Meurville, looking over the card in Mr. Mandeville's hand.

"Confound it! so I am," cried Sidney; "and here they have got Clavers down, he'll be mad enough; and Damer, upon my word. Ah! Caroline, you won't have Charles's arm all the evening."

"What! they have not got me, have they?" cried Mr. Damer, who was getting a cup of tea at the other end of the room, where, before a large table, was seated the governess dispensing it.

"Indeed, they have," said Sidney.

"Poor Charles!" exclaimed Miss Mandeville, ironically using the epithet, which, in different tones, Mrs. Damer sometimes applied to her husband; "how I pity you! Who are the others, Sidney?"

"Why, the Marquess of Ellendale and Sir Henry Ramsay."

"I hope it will be moon-light, or star-light, or something of that kind," observed Clermont.

"What an ungallant man you are," cried the Count de Meurville, "to think of such a thing! Shall we not have

'A nearer, dearer heaven of stars.'"

"If Lord Yalbroke were here," observed Miss Mandeville, "he'd quote nothing less than Shakspeare: he'd say our eyes——

'Would through the airy region stream so bright,  
That birds would sing, and think it were not night.'"

"Shall I get up and say it, Miss Mandeville?" asked the Count de Meurville; throwing a peculiar expression into his countenance.

"I admire that, De Meurville;" said Sidney, "asking a lady, indeed, if you shall compliment her."

"Well! I want to get into practice," returned the Count; "I'm grown quite stupid at it. The ladies I have had to do with of late are above—beyond all com-

pliment." And as he spoke, his eyes met for a moment those of Lady Georgiana.

"We should all get up, and make our best curtsies for so fine a speech," said Lady Mandeville laughing.

"No, I'll dispense with such homage," returned the Count de Meurville, throwing his eyes on the ground, which gave a peculiar softness to his expression. "Reserve your best curtsies for this day week; and, by the by," he added, taking up a card, "what music is there to be? Two bands, I declare! one belonging to the Militia of the County; the other to the regiment stationed at C——."

"Do you know any thing of the military near us?" inquired the Countess, of Lady Mandeville: "They are gentlemanly men."

"Oh yes," returned her Ladyship; "we have had them frequently to dine here. Indeed, Colonel Capel was to have been here to-day. I don't know what prevented him. Didn't you write him a note, Clermont?"

"No, not I, but Percy, Mr. Percy did; and there was an answer that he couldn't, or wouldn't, or would if he could come, or something or other. I only glanced at it."

"Is there a Captain Mears in that regiment?" asked Sir Gerald Vignoles. "I became acquainted with him when he was stopping on a visit with some of his friends in Yorkshire, and thought him rather a pleasant man. I have never met him since."

"Oh! he's at G——," said Sidney; "I was out fishing with him the other day; and indeed, now I think of it, he said he had heard you were in the country and intended to call upon you. But he has been laid up since, with a fall from his horse."

Desultory conversation continued to be carried on in different parts of the room, till it became so dusk, that to a stranger entering, the figures in it would have been undistinguishable; when, by a general impulse, lights were proposed, and rang for. The introduction of them was shortly followed by the entrance of all the gentlemen from the dining parlour, with the exception

of Sir William, who never appeared in his drawing-room after dinner : sometimes from preferring the evening to transact any business he might have with his steward; but more frequently, from having drunk till he was too heavy and stupid to be fit for female society.

The card-tables were now arranged—whist and casino for the elders, and a round game for those of the juniors who preferred it ; while music, and the pictures, puzzles, &c. which were scattered on different tables, occupied the remainder. The Count de Meurville and Lady Georgiana, hanging over a table of drawings, were employed till the carriage of the latter was announced, in making selections of those which would be best for her Ladyship's copy. And she invariably preferred those which had been done by his hands.

Previous to departure, they almost all agreed in their intention of attending the ball that day week. But none would resign the idea of seeing each other before that time to talk over the subject, or communicate any circumstance which might interfere to prevent them.

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## CHAPTER XI.

“ There's a language that's mute, there's a silence that speaks,  
 'T here is something, that cannot be told ;  
 Ther e are words which can only be read on the cheeks,  
 And thoughts but the eyes can unfold.”

*From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.*

Hermitage.

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

As you tell me that my letters amuse you, I shall continue to write them, though I am at a loss to conceive how they can ; and at a still greater, to imagine how you, versed in the annals of luckless lovers, from Sir Charles Grandison and Miss Byron, to Waverley and Miss Bradwardine, can be interested in the proceedings of two such inconsequent beings as De Meur-



ville and myself. Professing yourself, however, as you do, concerned about nothing so much, I can only suppose you tired of romance, and turning to reality for refreshment; and willing to gratify you on any subject, I shall, as you desire, write of nothing but him and myself; though it will, I am afraid, betray an encouragement of Clifford's affection on my part, which, considering him the betrothed husband of another, I ought to discountenance. The fact is, however, Catharine, and 'tis in vain to conceal it, that what I have heard of the caprice and pride of Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe's character, leads me to hope that, in some rash moment, she will marr her at present happy destiny by marrying another than Clifford—for the world may to her contain more De Meurvilles than one—by taking the veil, or some such mad step; and then your happy, happy Agnes, will in all human probability obtain the hand of the man, of whom she has long possessed the heart. This perhaps is a delusion, which I ought not to allow to influence my conduct; but it is one too delightful not to be encouraged; and when with De Meurville, when I have to resist the pleadings of his heart and my own, all my philosophy flies; and both of us indulging in the same affection for the other, are animated, I suspect, by the same hope. Indeed, he has often told me, when I, somewhat conscience-struck, have been exerting my eloquence in the cause of Annette, "That she doesn't care for him,—that it is his title and fortune alone she values; and that the first who offered himself to her, capable of eclipsing *him* in that, will eclipse him in her esteem, and make her renounce her engagement." "Of what consequence," I once exclaimed, when he was saying this, "Fortune can ever be to your wife, I own myself at a loss to imagine:" and he smiled (and looked at me, as he often does,) and told me, "I must one day resign *mine* for him! Add *that* to the thousand obligations my happy husband would ever have to owe me." "My happy husband!" repeated I, "Oh, Clifford!" "Well and shall I not be happy?" said he, in caressing accents. "Too happy when I

possess you." "If on me depended your happiness," replied I; "but—" De Meurville was not in a humour to hear of obstacles, and I remained silent: when we were interrupted by the entrance of visitors, or something or other to remind us that the world was not composed of lovers. As you read this *last* sentence, I hear you exclaim: "One would really think Agnes supposed it was, or she would not imagine I could be interested in this detail about herself and the Count de Meurville!" But remember, Catharine, it was *you* who invited it; and I would sooner tire you in obeying your own request than oblige you by withholding it on my own surmises. Therefore, to return to Clifford, you must know he gave me the other evening a surprise I have scarcely forgiven him for yet, in spite of his imploring tones and pleading looks. It happened that all the family (except myself, who from having sprained my ankle was obliged to stay at home,) were gone out, some to dine, and others only to walk; when I, at loss what to do, took it into my foolish head to endeavour to sketch a likeness of De Meurville, from a portrait of him that hung over the chimney-piece, little thinking I should be arrested in my labours by the original, (who had gone to Town a day or two before,) but so it was finally to be. My first alarm, indeed, was occasioned by the entrance of the servant with the tea; in bringing in the *et ceteras* of which he comes in and out so often, that after the first time I did not look round, but pursued very quietly my picture, which I had placed on the chimney-piece: till, in the midst of a vain attempt to make the expression of those eyes find their way to the paper, which had so often found their way to *my heart*, I was surprised by feeling the arms of some one thrown around me: and, on turning, to behold that person Clifford: it was indeed *his* arms that encircled me. It was before *him*! like a convicted culprit, I stood, wishing a world divided us. "I am afraid I alarmed you," said he, feeling I believe my heart beating violently, and seeing me covered with blushes.

"A little," I rather murmured than said, convinced

that he must have perceived how I had been employed; and in that humiliating idea almost losing my powers of articulation.

"I am so sorry," said Clifford, in a half-saucy, half-serious tone, and trying to meet my eyes as he spoke, which, however, were impenetrably fixed on the ground. "And how have you been, Agnes, since I saw you?" continued he; "and how does it occur that I am so happy as to find you alone?"

"I am very well," returned I; "but could not go out with the rest, on account of having sprained my ankle the other evening."

"How did you manage that?" said he, stooping down to look at it; but it bore such little outward mark of injury, that if he could have thought I had anticipated his return that evening, he might have supposed I had made it an excuse to stay at home for him.

"Have you no compassion on me, Agnes," whispered he, after a silence the most embarrassing to me.

"What do you mean?" I inquired.

"I mean, am I never to behold those dear eyes again," returned he.

It was not in woman, at least it was not in your friend to resist the voice and the manner in which these words were said. I raised my eyes to his, and asked him "to let go my hands," which he was holding in his.

He smiled, and resigned one; but had no sooner done so, than his eyes apparently were caught by the paper on the chimney-piece; on which, besides his own countenance, was inscribed his name in every possible shape and direction, and taking it up he began to examine it, when I, almost in tears, exclaimed, "If you have any regard for me, Clifford, give me that!"

He held it up for a moment, and looked from it to me. "You must make some warmer appeal," said he, "to tempt me to resign what I suspect—"

"If you have any affection for me," said I, in faltering accents, and he instantly resigned it, and I tore it to pieces.

"I don't think, Agnes," observed he, laughing, "you

could have been more terrified, had your father discovered a letter from some forbidden lover."

"I should have been less."

"Are you more afraid of me than of your father?" demanded he, with no very terrible expression of countenance.

"Not more afraid,—more ashamed."

"But you did not give me time to look at that paper," said he.

"Had you not, indeed, time?" returned I, reviving at that idea.

He gave me to understand he had not; but from doing so indirectly, I very much fear it was only out of compassion to my delicacy. During the rest of the time of being alone we walked about the room together, looking at the pictures, which, as it was not a room we usually sat in, he had never examined, and being all foreign landscapes, they interested him, who has been so much abroad, extremely.

I often wonder, Catharine, whether De Meurville will be delightful as a husband as he is as a lover. I certainly think, from my knowledge of his character, that the influence of the mistress must continue in the wife, or he would not have sufficient control over the warmth of his passions. For even on me, when an emotion of levity or pique has actuated me, he has sometimes cast glances which gave me a lively idea of what would be his language were he, as a husband, privileged to reprove me; more particularly were I unhappy enough to have become a wife whom he ceased to love, though he had the principle to protect. But at the same time I must do him the justice to say, that if he is inclined to be high-spirited and haughty when provoked, he is equally capable of being softened by repentance. And often has a look, a sigh of mine, recalled him to kiss and embrace the hand, he a moment before had rejected. Adieu! my dear Catharine, I do not expect your reply to this will commence with a parody on Dr. Johnson's reply to Mr. Boswell, when speaking of Miss Burney's "*Cecilia*," 'Sir, if you talk of *Cecilia*, talk on.' I am, &c. ANGES MANDEVILLE.

## CHAPTER XII.

**"Avaunt! I shake thee from me Care ;  
The gay, the youthful, and the fair,  
From Lodge, and Court, and House, and Hall,  
Are hurrying to the country ball."**

THE night of the ball, in preparations for which many a lady had been assiduous, at last arrived, fine as could be desired ; and the party from Abbeville entered C—— about ten o'clock, easily distinguishing the house where the company were assembled by the crowd surrounding it, and lights glaring through the windows. The first dance was forming as they entered the ball-room, and the Countess of Malverton was requested to open it with the Marquess of Ellendale, but her Ladyship declining the honour, it was transferred to Lady Ramsay, who led off with great grace ; she was followed by Lady Georgiana and Lord Clavers ; the former's beauty excited universal admiration ; and to be on all sides envied as the happy mother of Georgiana, was a triumph to which the heart of Lady Malverton could not be insensible.

A little before eleven o'clock the bustle and sensation without announced a new arrival, and dressed with carelessness, intended to convey an idea of no addition having been made to their ordinary dinner-dress, Lady Mandeville, two of her daughters, and Mrs. Damer entered, followed by several gentlemen ; partners were speedily furnished to those of the former who wished to dance, and the latter sauntered about for some time with fashionable apathy. After the set was concluded, the usual interregnum took place, in which couples walked about, or sat down together, engaged in fanning and flirting, while the general buzz throughout the room enabled individual conversations, whether directed to

criticism, politics, or love, to pass unheeded. Quadrilles next ensued, in which Lady Georgiana stood up with the Count de Meurville, and her former partner, Lord Clavers, took out Miss Mandeville; somewhat justifying by this early attention, the report which had been spread of his being attached to her; indeed, as they appeared beside each other in the dance, Lady Georgiana could not help thinking, that if similarity of person and manners were a requisite, they, to a certain degree, possessed it, for each were elegant in the former, languishing and fashionable in the latter; and both Lord Clavers and Miss Mandeville, from habits of dissipation, had lost the glow of nature in an apathy far less pleasing; while in Lady Georgiana, to whom these thoughts occurred, as well as in the Count de Meurville, Nature appeared conspicuous, though it was a nature to the highest degree elevated and refined. While dancing with the latter, Lady Georgiana took an opportunity to inquire after Agnes, who was not at the ball, and as she pronounced her name threw an expression of archness into her voice, which she supposed, had the Count de Meurville been partial to his cousin, as she suspected, would have produced a corresponding meaning in his; unaware that a man may mention less or more indifferently the woman he loves, than any of her sex beside, only because he values her beyond it all.

And in the Count de Meurville's answer she could certainly trace little to enlighten her on the subject of his affections. He merely replied, that "Agnes had a cold, and Lady Mandeville was afraid to allow her to go out."

"She's very delicate, I believe?" said Lady Georgiana.

"Oh, very!" returned the Count. "It was to recover her health and Miss Mandeville's the family went abroad."

As he spoke, Charlotte Mandeville came over to them; and after nodding to Lady Georgiana, whom she had spoken to before, said—"Clifford, I have taken the liberty of declaring myself your partner for the next

set, for I was haunted by a horrible man, whom I refused to dance with, on pretext of being engaged, and who persisted in knowing to whom."

"I shall be very happy," returned the Count de Meurville.

"Oh, of course," said Charlotte. "But why, Lady Georgiana, do you allow him to sit down; whenever I have a handsome partner I profess myself inclined to walk; 'tis only when I have been unlucky enough to get the contrary I hide myself and him, as you and Clifford are doing now." So saying, she turned away, leaving Lady Georgiana's cheeks suffused with blushes.

"Miss Charlotte takes the liberty of saying whatever arises in her mind, you may perceive, Lady Georgiana," said the Count De Meurville, noticing the confusion of his partner.

"She only anticipated the proposition I was about to make, of taking a turn around the room," returned Lady Georgiana, rising with dignity.

"You are very good," said he, "not to make the dismissal of your partner atone for the folly of his cousin?"

"Very good!" returned her Ladyship, playfully, "not to punish myself. But what is the name of that lady who has been talking to my mother at such an unmerciful rate this last half hour? I am very curious to know."

"In green, you mean," said the Count de Meurville.

"In the colours of the rainbow, for that matter," replied Lady Georgiana. "I can count at a glance, pink, purple, green, brown, &c. &c."

"That's Mrs. Raymond, if I don't mistake," said her companion.

"Well, do come and assist me to rid my mother of her," cried Lady Georgiana; "she hates being beset with a great talker. How shall we contrive it? We'll say, there's a young lady just fainted from the heat of the room, which will be truth, but we don't know who it is; and then Mrs. Raymond will start up and think

it's one of her daughters, for I am sure there are several of them here "

"And then," said the Count, "your mother will make you sit down, and send me off to see after the young lady, and scold me for not having offered my services before."

"Not at all," returned Lady Georgiana; "the anxious mother will be off with an exclamation of, 'Perhaps it's Mary,' 'or Bessy,' or anything else; and my mother will hope it is not; and I shall be certain it is; and you'll look indifferent, as if you didn't care who it was. And when Mrs. Raymond's at the other end of the room, I'll make my mother laugh by telling her my stratagem."

Lady Georgiana accomplished her design: got the talkative lady from her mother's side, and sunk down there herself in a convulsion of laughter, leaving the Count de Meurville to explain its cause "Now don't render all my trouble useless," said Lady Georgiana, with the petulance of a spoiled child, "by remaining here till your tormentor returns, for I am sure you must have got a headache already, but come with us into the card-room."

"I am ready, indeed," returned Lady Malverton, rising; "being tired of this situation."

"But I assure you, Mamma," said the sprightly Lady Georgiana, "I have not done with mischief yet, though you think proper to look grave on this frolic."

"I never look grave on you," returned the Countess, fondly.

"You know the inutility of the measure," said her Ladyship, laughing and glancing archly at the Count de Meurville.

"No, I am only aware of its impossibility."

"What's useless may as well be impossible" saucily remarked Lady Georgiana. "But to return to what I was saying, I intend to do more mischief; I must tell my aunt that Ellen is flirting and talking at a great rate with a nobody knows who, and every one is staring at her; and she'll be in such a fright, and not know one



card from another, and be begging any one to take her hand while she goes in pursuit of her daughter ; and I shall be amused to the last degree."

"You are an incorrigible creature, Georgy," said her mother, as the former walked demurely over to Lady Vignoles ; "isn't she, Count Meurville ?"

"Only a delightful one, Lady Malverton ; one who would make any mother proud, and any lover happy."

"But how does it happen," inquired the Countess, seating herself, "that we don't see more of the young ladies from Hermitage this evening ?"

"Why, I don't know," said the Count leaning back on the sofa on which they were seated ; "we thought there was enough of us, that we had come in storming order, as it was. Don't you think so too ? But indeed," added he quickly, "we had hoped to have had Mrs. Balfour with us this evening, she has been promising to come down to Hermitage some time past. You know the Balfours, of course."

"A little," returned Lady Malverton ; "but they have had a large family since I knew them."

"Without exception," said the Count de Meurville, in an animated tone, "they have six of the most beautiful children I ever saw."

"They might easily be handsome if they resembled their parents," returned Lady Malverton.

"Well, they do," said the Count ; "and you can conceive nothing prettier than the picture Mr. and Mrs. Balfour have had taken of them in a group. Here Adrian, an arch, black-eyed boy is spinning his top ; there Agnes, a wild, auburn baby, sitting with her playthings, while Sidney, Cecilia, and I forget how many more, amusing themselves with birds, flowers, &c., fill up the piece."

"I can imagine it must be very well worth seeing," said Lady Malverton ; "and whenever I go to London, I shall call on the Balfours, were it but to look at the original of what you have so happily sketched."

"But in the mean time here comes the most noble the Marquess of Ellendale," observed the Count de

Meurville, rising. "Your Lordship is about to claim my *ci-devant* partner, I presume," continued the latter, addressing his Lordship.

"Just so," said the Marquess: "where shall I be fortunate enough to find Lady Georgiana Granville?"

"She is standing at the card table over there," returned the Countess; "having left me to flirt with the Count de Meurville."

"I shall not allow her to treat me so unceremoniously, Lady Malverton," observed his Lordship, laughing, as he led off the fair Georgiana: "but having won shall wear the prize."

"Lord Ellendale's engagement reminds me of my own," said the Count de Meurville; "and here's Mrs. Boswell very probably sent as deputy to claim me."

"You judge right," cried Mrs. Boswell; "I am commissioned by Miss Charlotte Mandeville to call you to account for neglect, or release you from your promise, if you think it too irksome for fulfilment."

"Too irksome to fulfil a promise made to a lady," said the Count de Meurville; "if she comes to make that supposition, I must indeed be off;" and so saying he left the room, leaving the Countess of Malverton and Mrs. Boswell together.

"Well, are you not completely fatigued?" said the latter; "I am come in here as a retreat from the noise and heat."

"Indeed," returned Lady Malverton, "I have been taking it very quietly, not dancing, walking, or talking much."

"You have been playing spectator," said Mrs. Boswell laughing, "and criticising every one."

"No; only admiring!" replied the Countess.

"In truth," cried Mrs. Boswell, fixing her eyes in arch womanly penetration, "you must be very lenient if you could admire every thing this evening; for I think there are some as ridiculous figures in the next room as ever I saw."

"Well, to admiring every one," said the Countess,

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"I will add, that I could; leaving you to discover who I could not."

"One whom you could not I'll tell you in a moment," returned Mrs. Boswell, "and that's Mrs. Harland: did you ever see such a dressed-up ridiculous fool in your life; dancing away as if the fate of the nation depended on it?"

"She does look very foolish, certainly," said the Countess; "I was noticing her and Mrs. Pennington, all bedizened out in pink."

"Ah! she again," cried Mrs. Boswell; "with all her neck and bosom displayed, as if she were a fair girl of seventeen, instead of a coarse woman of forty! I am sure I shall not forget the look of disgust which the Count de Meurville cast upon her when she was figuring down the dance, fancying herself, I suppose, a happy prototype of the *Venus de Medicis*."

"Though a more unhappy one could scarcely be conceived!" said Lady Malverton, laughing.

"And is it not sickening," continued Mrs. Boswell, "though she's a Helen in comparison to the others, to see Miss Mandeville, with her things drooping off her shoulders, languishing and sentimentalizing with Lord Claver, as if they were betrothed lovers, when every one knows in his embarrassed circumstances he'd be more likely to marry a brewer's daughter, who was rich, than an Earl's, who, like Miss Mandeville, was not."

"That Mrs. Damer," said Lady Malverton, "the bride I mean, seems very timid: I could not help noticing her when she was dancing in the quadrilles."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Boswell; "she appears, poor thing! to deem herself unworthy of breathing the same air with others."

"The same air with the Mandevilles, at least," said the Countess; "apropos to whom, how does it happen that two of the daughters are never visible; one is, I should think, quite old enough to be come out."

"Oh, it was always the case," returned Mrs. Boswell; "they are no better than upper servants at home."

Lady Mandeville, obliged to retrench in some ways, makes this one ; and the girls, who, by the by, are very plain, work I am told a great deal ; and when there's company, superintend on the background, that no extravagance or waste may be committed."

"It is a prudent plan," returned the Countess, drily.

"I have heard," continued Mrs. Boswell, in a lower tone, "that there is a son or two in business of some kind ; but this I do not know for certain, it may be a mere report. Lady Mandeville never speaks of any but the two at home, and one who is with his regiment in America."

"There are families," said Lady Malverton,— "and I should suspect that one—in which the least promising are obliged to toil for that existence which the more favoured have but to enjoy and to adorn."

Supper was presently ready, and the company left warm, well-lighted apartments, for a long cold room but dimly illumined ; where, on long tables, surrounded with benches, was spread the repast, which consisted of every delicacy of the season. The gentlemen were assiduous in their attentions ; the ladies, in general, pleasing and pleased. There was laughing, talking, and singing ; and after the conclusion of the whole, some returned to the dancing-room, but the greater number to their homes ; among whom were the families of Abbeville and Hermitage.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"Your Author treats of love's delights,  
Of Halycon days, and joyous nights;  
To the gay fancy lovely themes,  
And fain I'd hope they're more than dreams."

COTTON.

ACCORDING to a previous arrangement, the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana Granville set out to pay a visit of a few days at Hermitage, the morning after the Vignoles' departure from Abbeville. As they did not leave the latter till late, there was time for nothing after their arrival but a re-introduction between themselves and Mrs. Balfour, before retiring to dress for dinner. The latter, who had been out driving all the morning, returning the numberless visits which had been paid her since coming to the country, was in her pelisse and bonnet when Lady Malverton entered, and presented in her appearance altogether an emblem of one accustomed to every comfort, and aware of every advantage, either natural or adventitious; less delicate in figure than Miss Mandeville, she possessed a beauty of face more calculated to be popular, for it was more characterized by health and good-humour.

As the Countess and her daughter, previous to descending to the drawing-room after dressing, were standing for a moment at the window of the room which divided their chambers, Miss Mandeville, attired in white, with a profusion of pink flowers in her hair, and a beautiful baby in her arms, entered.

"I am come, Lady Malverton," said she, "to introduce to *you* one of my sister's charming children, whom I just caught from the nurse:—this is Adelaide."

"The lovely creature," exclaimed the Countess, in a tone of rapture.

"The little angel!" ejaculated her daughter, kissing the child who was indeed a perfect beauty, with lips and cheeks red as the coral that hung about its neck, and eyes whose lids

"With jetty fringe  
Kiss'd its soft cheek's blooming tinge."

"But let us descend," said Miss Mandeville. "They are too much accustomed to see *me* play the part of nurse to be surprised."

Lady Malverton and her daughter agreed; and Madelina followed them into the drawing room (which was now filled) with the timid, smiling air of a pretty girl who has stolen a kitten, or purloined a bird's-nest.

"Ah, Maddy," said Mrs. Balfour, who in a handsome dinner-dress of figured silk was seated on a sofa, "you have been paying a visit to the nursery, I perceive."

"No, only intercepted some of its property," returned Miss Mandeville, glancing at Lord Claver, who was leaning against the window.

"Its most beautiful property, I should say," observed his Lordship, advancing and holding out his arms to the child, "had I not seen the rest."

"Madelina is an excellent nurse," said Lady Mandeville, and the gouty feet of Lord Coralcourt, which were by her side, were before her imagination, as she spoke, "she is never so happy as when with the children."

"How *aimable*!" observed Lord Coralcourt in a low and pompous tone, to the flattered mother of Madelina—"how delightful to see a young lady, who, like your daughter, has mixed in the first circles of fashion, thus domestic!"

"Domestic life would be indeed her element," said Lady Mandeville, with something like a sentimental sigh; "and I often wish we were able to enjoy it more for her sake: but Sir William is so fond of company, and our situation in the country demands certain sacrifices of our time and fortune, and——"

"And is it possible," interrupted his Lordship in the

same *sotto voce* that he spoke before ; “ do you really think that Miss Mandeville could resign company, admirers, amusements, all that she at present enjoys, for retirement and a limited acquaintance ; if marriage, for instance,” and his Lordship laughed, “ offered her the exchange ?”

“ Could ! oh, my Lord,” said her Ladyship, with something like a smile of compassion at his doubting it, and delighted at the opening it gave her ; “ you do not know my daughter, or you would not ask such a question. Unite her to a man, whether young or old, for it is not partiality, but justice, to say she would render equally happy the morning or evening of life. Endow her with fortune to contribute to the happiness and relief of others ; and rank, perhaps, because it would heighten the influence of her example ; and then separate her from society, dissipation, flattery,—and not one sigh would it cost her. All her happiness would be centered in her husband, her home, and the power of doing good.”

While Lady Mandeville was thus exerting her eloquence in the cause of her daughter, and investing her with perfections which she was very indifferent whether the *Countess of Caralcourt* realized or disappointed, *provided* that by possessing that title she was enabled to do the *one* or the *other*, Miss Mandeville was engaged in a flirtation with Lord Claver, who, as he tossed the little Adelaide in his arms, was complimenting her on her affection for children.

“ What a heart must that woman have, my Lord, who would not delight in my sister’s ?” observed she ; and to display a contrast favourable as she hoped to herself, she turned to Mr. Damer, who then approached them ; and with the sweetest smile in the world, expressed a fear that the introduction of the baby was more agreeable to herself than some of the other ladies in the room.

“ Why, I can’t answer for the sentiments of the ladies,” said Mr. Damer, laughing ; “ Miss Mandeville, who is *herself* so *feminine*, can best surmise them. But

of the gentlemen she seems to have made one convert, at least."

"At the expense of one foe, then, I suspect," returned she; "for your wife, I know, hates the sight of children, and has often prevented me bringing them into the drawing-room."

"It is to be hoped, then," said Mr. Damer, affecting to smile but really annoyed, "that she'll never be troubled with having any herself."

"Nay, Charles," cried Madelina, in a fawning tone, "do not say that. I dare say the time *will* come, when *herself* a fond, anxious mother, she will cease to ridicule others who are so too."

"What! isn't it sufficient that she dislikes children herself, but she must laugh ~~at~~ *at* others do?" inquired Mr. Damer, quickly turning and looking at his wife, who having heard (as Madelina was aware) what had passed, sat covered with blushes, though her head was averted in a contrary direction from her husband.

Mrs. Damer had unfortunately exposed herself to the maliciousness which was now exercised against her, by having affected an indifference to Mr. Balfour's children she was far from feeling, and which she had foolishly assumed from being disgusted with the fulsome expressions of fondness which Madelina (who really detested them) perpetually lavished upon them. But the latter was greatly mistaken in thinking that her palpable and ungenerous communication of this could be unnoticed by, or make her appear by contrast more amiable to the man whom she wished to please. On the contrary, he saw through her design, and the *first* moment of its detection was the *last* of her appearing lovely in Lord Claver's eyes.

The sending for nurse, and announcement of dinner, put thoughts and conversation in a different channel. And Sir William Mandeville and the Countess of Malverton led the way to the dining-room.

When the ladies collected again in the latter, Mrs. Balfour was the principal talker. Anxious, perhaps, to impress Lady Malverton with more exalted ideas of



her fortune and consequence than she had hitherto had an opportunity of doing, she conversed in a decided and fashionable tone, on 'the beauties of the new opera, the brilliancy of the last drawing-room, the merits of new publications, &c. &c., and then descanted on her annoyances with regard to servants; the fine airs of her nurses and footmen; the insolence of her own woman: crowning all with wondering how other people *did* get on. That she fancied her children looked worse than any one's else, though she was sure there was as much if not *more* care taken of them; that her carriages were less at her own disposal, though they had so many horses, and the men had such monstrous salaries:—"But, I believe, every one makes the same complaints," said Mrs. Balfour, laughing at herself.

"Every one, be assured, Adelaide," observed her mother, "who has such an establishment as yours;" when they were interrupted by the entrance of the children and coffee.

The little Balfours were individually beautiful children; but in a group, the boys dressed in their plaids, the girls in muslin robes and coloured sashes, they formed indeed a perfect picture. And as they were all playing about together on the carpet, Lady Malverton saw completely realized the loveliness which the Count de Meurville had described them possessing.

As dinner had been that day about six o'clock, they were joined by some of the gentlemen at a little past eight, who, with all the ladies, except Mrs. Damer and Agnes, went out to walk. Of the two latter, one was prevented by a violent cold, the other by a painful continuance of her sprained ankle. And when the Count de Meurville entered the drawing-room (which he did a few minutes after the party had gone out,) he found them both at chess. Preferring a seat by the side of Agnes to taking a walk which she could not enjoy, he sat down there with a book in his hand, and supposing her interested in her game, did not disturb her by conversation, unaware, that from the moment his arm was thrown round the back of her chair, all her thoughts

were in confusion ; and pawns, rooks, and bishops, became of equal importance. Afraid of Mrs. Damer, who had frequently corrected her moves in silence, at last proclaiming her inattention aloud, Agnes broke silence by inquiring of her cousin what he was reading.

"Oh, a very dry work !" returned the Count de Meurville, "one Yalbroke has insisted on my reading, and which seems calculated to induce a man to hang himself. The writer would persuade you there is nothing like happiness or gratitude in the world ; and that a state of apathetic indifference to every thing is most philosophic ; and several other agreeable ideas."

"Positively you shall not read it then," said Agnes, laying her hand over the book with the gentle authority of love ; "for I don't wish *my cousin*," and she looked at Mrs. Damer, "to resemble Lord Yalbroke, who must have picked up all his odd ideas from that and similar works."

"You needn't be afraid, Agnes," returned he, pressing her hand as he removed it from before him ; "it only convinces me of what I never doubted,—that I am a man, and no *philosopher*."

"And long may you remain so," said she ; "but Caroline, you are going. Have I exhausted your patience by my inattention ?"

"Oh, no," returned Mrs. Damer ; "but if the Count de Meurville will take my place for a minute or two, I must step for an orange to assuage my thirst."

"I can, certainly," said the Count de Meurville ; "but," he added, as she shut the door, "I'd rather talk to my own Agnes."

"Oh, play *something* !" returned the latter, moving two of her own pieces in quick succession : "or she'll suspect——" Agnes added ; when checking herself she rose, and went towards an open window, which looked out into the shrubbery.

"What will she suspect ?" said De Meurville, following her, and throwing his arm about her waist.

"I don't know, I can't tell," cried Agnes, only anx.

ious to hide her face from the searching, the eloquent expression of his.

"Shall I tell you?" whispered her lover, as they leant out of the window.

"No; or you'll make me repent not having followed her."

"Well! then, you must comply with the request I am going to make of you," said he; "though I own it is not my very first—nor I hope," he presently added, "will it be my very last."

"What is it?" inquired she.

"It is to be given a lock of this sweet hair, Agnes."

"Trifling as is the request, it is one imprudent to be granted," said she; "and yet—" she hesitated.

"And yet you will not—*cannot* refuse me," cried De Meurville, snatching up a pair of scissors from a table near, and drawing a comb from the luxuriant tresses he so much admired.

"Well, make haste," said Agnes, trembling, as he was deliberating from where the prize might be taken with least detriment; "for Caroline will return."

And Caroline's step was heard approaching as Agnes's hair still floated in wild confusion on her shoulders: "Goodness, De Meurville!" she exclaimed, hastily adjusting it and resuming her seat at the chess-table, while he continued at the window laughing at her agitation, and folding in a letter the hair she had given him.

"We have made great progress, Caroline," said Agnes, trying to rally herself when Mrs. Damer entered.

"Well! I suppose the game is finished," cried the latter, "by my seeing the Count de Meurville over there."

"No, indeed," said he, turning round with a suppressed smile; "I found I was making no hand of it, and left it for you to continue."

"You did not do much mischief either," returned Mrs. Damer, reviewing her game and preparing to continue it; when Madame came into the room to make tea, and the gentlemen who had not gone out sallied

from the dining-parlour, so that it was by mutual consent put aside.

"Why, where are all the company gone?" inquired Lord Coralcourt and Mr. Fraser, as they entered.

"All gone to walk except us, my Lord," returned the Count de Meurville.

"And why are you not of the party, and Mrs. Damer, and Miss *Annette*?" added he, looking at the ladies.

The unfortunate name attributed to her by mistake, caused Agnes to steal a glance at De Meurville, over whose brow clouds in a moment passed.

"Ah, Agnes!" said his Lordship, laughing, as Mrs. Damer corrected his mistake of names in answering him. "I was thinking of a young lady of my acquaintance, who greatly resembles Miss Mandeville here, when I called her *Annette*. She is very pretty too," continued his Lordship, "but not perhaps quite so pretty as you, Miss Agnes."

"I dare say I should be very proud to be mistaken for her if I knew her," returned Agnes, blushing.

And they were now interrupted by the entrance of those who had been walking.

"We have taken a most delightful walk," cried the Countess of Malverton and Lady Mandeville. "You and Agnes have had a great loss," continued the latter, looking at Mrs. Damer, "in not having been able to accompany us."

"Oh, any one has had a loss," cried Miss Mandeville, "who did not go out this evening. It was a most charming one!" added she, affectedly sitting down and throwing back her shawl and bonnet.

"Well, where did you all go?" inquired Mr. Fraser, in a plain blunt manner.

"Why, we divided our forces," returned Miss Mandeville: "Mrs. Fraser and Miss Beckford, and Mama and Charlotte, only walked about the grounds; but the Countess, Lady Georgiana, Adelaide, and myself, went down the road and pulled honey-suckles, dog-roses, &c., and looked into the cottages, and talked to the old

women, and kissed the pretty children, while the gentlemen flirted with the girls, and rank their milk, and threw about the hay, and ruralized it completely !”

“ Ah, I was going to ask after your squires,” said Lord Coralcourt, “ as you did not mention the division attached to each party ?”

“ Why, upon comparing notes,” said Charlotte, “ as we walked up the terrace, we found each of our division of squires had conducted themselves so similarly bad, as equally to deserve being excluded from notice.”

“ Upon my word you are very severe on us, Miss Charlotte,” cried Mr. Landskay: “ for my own part, my only crimes were not sufficiently appreciating the beauty of a sky you pointed out to me, and pulling to pieces a flower you had gathered, and treading by accident on Flora’s toes and——”

“ Oh, spare us the catalogue of your crimes,” cried Lord Claver, “ they seem most heinous, and there’s no father confessor in company to absolve you.”

“ If *his* are heinous, what are your’s, my Lord ?” inquired Miss Mandeville; “ who tore my beautiful sprigged muslin with a nasty bramble-bush you picked up, and got us all into a lane we were near not being able to find our way out of again.”

“ Yes,” said Mrs. Balfour, “ and made the country people laugh at our awkwardness in getting over the stiles.”

“ Not forgetting,” interrupted the Countess, with a significant shake of her head, “ that his Lordship drew on us all manner of abuse, by persisting in our wading through an old man’s corn-field.”

“ Ah, hang that old man !” said Lord Claver, “ his voice still vibrates through my ears. I was determined on going through his field, for the sake of opposition.”

“ By way of making yourself popular in the country, I presume,” returned Lady Mandeville, drily.

“ Just so,” answered his Lordship, in the same tone. „ But really, Miss Mandeville,” he added, in the playful voice he had spoken before ; “ it’s too bad to make *me* the only delinquent called to account, when those gen-

“Gentlemen over there must plead guilty to the same offence.”

“Well, if you can get them to stand their trial,” said Lady Malverton, “I’ll be their judge; and those three ladies, (looking at Mrs Balfour, Miss Mandeville, and her daughter,) their Jury.”

“Heaven defend me from such a judge and such a jury!” said Sidney Mandeville, laughing; “that’s a court in which indeed, I should expect no mercy.”

“No; because it would be a court of justice,” observed Mrs. Balfour.

“Rather say a court of caprice, Adelaide,” rejoined her brother.

In remark and repartee, thus trifling and good-humoured, did tea time pass away; after which a couple of card-tables were formed for some of the party, and the rest gathered themselves indiscriminately around a large table, at which a few of the ladies produced light work; and the remainder, with the gentlemen, amused themselves in looking over port-folios of drawings and prints, or inventing and unravelling puzzles, charades, &c., till the supper-trays were brought in.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

“And when she glides through the dance, (and in touching with easy and accustomed grace the hands of many,) she feels there is but one hand whose touch she can recognise; and waiting for its thrilling and lifelike vibration, moves on like a statue, cold and graceful, till the pygmalion-touch warms her into woman.”

MELMOTH.

As the party at Hermitage (assembled in a morning-room) were after breakfast arranging different plans for the disposal of the day, they were somewhat surprised by the sudden entrance of Lord Yalbroke, who had been stopping for a few weeks past on a visit in the neighbourhood.

“I am come,” cried his Lordship, after paying his  
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respects to the company, "to endeavour to induce some of you to perform a charitable action."

"I hope," said Lady Mandeville, "no great inducement is requisite to prevail on us all to do that."

"Well then, without farther preamble," said his Lordship, "will you make up a party from here to go to the theatre this evening?"

"To the theatre!" repeated every one.

"Yes: not to a London theatre, certainly, but to a theatre established by some poor strolling players, in the town of ———, who are in great distress, and for whom, from what I have heard, I am a good deal interested."

The whole party smiled, knowing Lord Yalbroke's enthusiastic passion for theatricals, and begged farther explanation.

"Why, I am in a hurry now," returned his Lordship, in his usual wild, unsatisfactory manner; "but I'll dine here, if Lady Mandeville has no objection, and tell you more about it. In the meantime, do make up your minds to go. The Shelbournes have promised; and I shall try and secure some of the military.—Farewell." "The play," added he, coming back, "is to be the Belle's Stratagem."

"I hope this is not a Beau's Stratagem," observed Mr. Fraser, as his Lordship left the room.

"Beau's or Belle's," said Lady Mandeville, "I shall not go to catch my death of cold."

"Nor I neither, I suspect," returned Lady Malverton.

"Well, I shall," said Charlotte, independently; "if any one will accompany me."

"Oh, I'll join you," cried Lord Claver; "it's just the sort of thing I delight in."

"Ah, but I would not trust myself with you. Will you go, Mrs. Fraser?"

"If I am wanted as a chaperon," replied the Lady; "but here returns Mr. Sidney."

"Well!" said Lady Mandeville, "has Lord Yalbroke

enlightened you on the subject of this charity, as he calls it?"

"No: I can only make out that the manager broke his leg some time ago; and that he has a wife and a dozen children; and the whole troop were robbed lately. And—and in short he wants us to patronize them."

"I suspect," said Lady Clermont, "there's some pretty girl, whom he's madly in love with, at bottom of it all."

"I'd have no objection to go," cried Miss Mandeville, languidly, "if I thought the play would be so intolerably performed as to afford one a good laugh; but to go to a country play decently acted, is one of the miseries of human life."

"Well," said Lady Mandeville, "we'll see what Lord Yalbroke has to say more on the subject by-and-by; and if there seems any thing tempting in the prospect, some of you can go. But, in the meantime, what shall we do with ourselves? It is just one."

"Whatever we like, if it depends on the weather," observed Sidney, looking out.

"I have several visits to pay," continued Lady Mandeville; "so that if the Countess has no objection—"

"I have no objection to any thing," interrupted her Ladyship.

"Well, then," said Lady Mandeville; "we'll order the barouche at once, and some of us prepare to go out visiting."

This arrangement was agreed to, and the Countess, Lady Mandeville, and Mrs. Balfour, went immediately to put on their things, while the rest of the party disposed of themselves in different ways. Some assembled in the cottage, where the ladies took their work and the gentlemen read or drew; others went to walk or ride, and a few remained in the library or billiard-room, to read, write, or play.

According to promise, Lord Yalbroke made his appearance at dinner-time, and gave such further accounts



of the distress, and yet goodness, of the performers, as to induce some of the young people to prepare after dinner, for going to the theatre. While waiting for the carriages, the party to go assembled in the drawing-room, talking, and laughing, and forming the frivolous suppositions and fears that are usual on such occasions.

"I am sure," cried Miss Mandeville, suddenly, "that we have several copies of the Belle's Stratagem somewhere in the library, for I know, about two or three years ago, we had an intention of acting it here. Do, Arabella, go and see."

Arabella went, and returned in a little time with two copies, which was all she could discover.

"I hope," said Agnes, carelessly taking up one, "there will be a pretty girl to play Letitia Hardy; she has so many pretty speeches to make. Here, for instance, when Doricourt inquires what she'd be if married to the man she loved, and who was worthy of her love? She's to reply, 'I'd be *all* and *anything*, the soul of whim, the spirit of variety. Live with him in the eye of fashion, or in the shades of retirement. Change my country, my sex; feast with him in an Esquimaux hut or a Persian pavilion. Join him in the victorious war-dance on the borders of Lake Ontario, or sleep to the soft breathings of the lute in the cinnamon groves of Ceylon. Dig with him in the mines of Golconda,' &c."

"'Delightful wilkness!'" cried Lord Yalbroke, personifying Doricourt, and holding out his arms to her; "'Oh, to catch thee for ever, and hold thee in this little cage!'"

Encouraged by the admiration she read in the eyes of those around, and forgetting, for the first time, to regard those of De Meurville, who was leaning against the mantel-piece at some little distance, Agnes, with the thoughtlessness and almost natural vanity of a young and lovely girl, continued with Lord Yalbroke to recite speeches from different plays, personifying the characters who spoke them as she did so; when suddenly a glance at the Count betrayed such mingled displeasure

and disdain depicted in his countenance, at what he probably conceived her levity and affectation, as in a moment put to flight her theatrical powers, and Rosalind, Juliet, and Ophelia, were all forgotten in the fear of having offended him, without whose concurrence no praise could be delightful, nor no plaudits please. With her colour gone, her eyes starting tears, Agnes stood equally unable to proceed, and irritated at the look of calm superiority with which, master of her feelings, and, as she fancied, despising their versatility, De Meurville stood regarding her.

Fortunately, it was not a moment in which either his observation or her embarrassment, was perceptible; and when she broke off her acting with a sudden exclamation of being able to recollect nothing more, no notice was taken of it, but some one else began to perform and recite with easy freedom. Presently the carriages were announced, and De Meurville, who before had intended to be of the party to the theatre, now voted himself off the expedition; and with assumed carelessness, but evident determination, resisted the entreaties of every one but Agnes to come along with them. The latter saw in a moment, that he was displeased; and determined to prove it to her, by abstaining from a place where he knew she, his general attraction, was yet to be. At first she hesitated whether to affect to notice it or not; but as they were all leaving the room, except the Count, she could not resist the temptation of lingering for a little, to inquire what had induced him to change his resolution of accompanying them. De Meurville, who had thrown himself carelessly along a sofa, as they were as he thought all departing, started up on perceiving Agnes returning and approaching him, and by the light of the fire she could perceive something like a smile—though of dubious import—play about his mouth. “Why won’t you come, Clifford?” said she, appearing at the same time half-ashamed of asking him the question.

“Oh, I don’t know—I am not inclined,” returned

he ; but looking as if a very different motive prompted him.

"The fact is," interrupting she, "only you don't wish to offend me by saying so, that you have had acting enough for one evening."

"Perhaps I have," sighed De Meurville ; "but I do not know, Agnes, that I should be altogether restrained by fear of offending you, from telling you so ; for you might interpret my aversion to seeing you in any character than your own, into my considering the latter so perfect."

"Yes, if I were very vain I certainly might," said Agnes ; "but to tell you the truth, it would require my being so to draw such an inference from either your looks or words,"

"Would it?" said De Meurville, the displeasure her observation occasioned evidently only mitigated by its being from her it came ; "then tell me what was their import, Agnes?"

"Oh, it is of no consequence!" said she quickly ; and would have left him : for she thought when she had made something like an overture to conciliate him, he need not have urged her to so mortifying an avowal, but still he detained her.

"Are you displeased with me, Agnes," said he, "for asserting a power with which you first invested me?"

"Not if there had been any necessity for so doing," said she.

"Of that," said De Meurville, "you should conceive me a judge, or never have appointed me a guide ; but you gave me one standard, by which ever to regulate your conduct,—by what I should deem correct in my sister's."

"I could not have known," said Agnes, "when I did so, how very exalted one it was ; or I should have despaired of conforming to it."

De Meurville half-smiled ; but perceiving tears in her eyes, took her hand, and would have drawn her towards him, but she withdrew it ; and the party outside, who had been hitherto detained talking to the gentlemen,

coming from the dining-room, appearing now on the point of departure, she left him without one word, for which in vain he pleaded, or one look, which it is probable he might have valued more.

The performers were wretched, but consequently greater novelties to the Mandeville party; and unrestrained by that feeling,—for the most part at least,—which might have prevented some from deriving amusement from the mortification of others, as abounding in that selfishness which taught them to seek for gratification, from whatever source,—they continued while at the theatre, to laugh and amuse themselves, and upon their return to criticise and decry, in all the happy security and aristocratic pride of those whom nature and fortune had for ever exempted, apparently, from the possibility of being exposed to similar criticisms.

At dinner the next day, the ladies were all streaming with blue ribands, in honour of Lord Clavers, who had been elected in the morning; and in the evening there was a ball, to which the families around had been previously invited. It was opened by Mr. Mandeville and Lady Elizabeth Delaval, sister of the Marquess of Ellendale.

Agnes, who had had no communication with De Meurville since the evening before, either by looks or words—for he had rode to London early in the morning and not returned till a short time before the arrivals for the evening commenced—now watched anxiously to see whether he would, as usual, take an early opportunity of soliciting her hand: but the first quadrille commenced, and he danced with Lady Georgiana Granville; the second, and he engaged himself to Miss Torrens; the third, and Agnes was almost in despair: but, as if interpreting the glance, which for a moment met his own, De Meurville did not join in it; but throwing himself on a seat, continued half conversing and half regarding her, in a manner that occasioned in Agnes, who was dancing with Lord Clavers, a timidity and embarrassment, the most lovely to behold, the most painful to feel, the most gratifying, it would seem, to man to

inspire, that can well be imagined. She knew so well his horror of any thing like levity, and suspicion of it even in the most trifling freedom, that she literally shrank from every touch, and avoided every whisper, thereby incurring the imputation of affectation from all but him, for whose sake this appearance was incurred. At last, chance so occasioned it that De Meurville took, for a few minutes, the place of the gentleman who had been dancing opposite to her, and then indeed this confusion was no longer visible, or had changed its character; for the looks which occasioned it wore smiles, and the eyes which created it beamed love.

"Do look," said a young lady who was not dancing; to one near her, "at Miss Mandeville! Did you ever see any one whose appearance has so changed within these few minutes; she was looking so pale and languid, and is now so animated and sprightly!"

"Oh, I'm admiring her affectation, I assure you!" returned the other; "but that is Miss Agnes Mandeville, if you mean the young Lady in white, with blue flowers in her hair."

"I mean she who is now giving her hand to the Count de Meurville."

"Well, that is Miss Agnes Mandeville, and if report speaks true, she'd be happy to give him that hand for life."

"How beautiful she is!" involuntarily exclaimed her companion, "one would think the man she loved must worship her."

"Beautiful! Oh no!" returned the other; "even the men don't contend for that; if you talk of beauty, talk of Lady Georgiana Granville!"

Miss Matthorpe glanced for a moment at the latter, who was blazing by the side of the Marquess of Ellendale, more brilliant than his orders—"Yes, she is a splendid creature indeed," said she; "but she looks so proudly conscious of it, as if she almost scorned your admiration, and were in fact too exalted to be loved. But Miss Mandeville looks so sweet and humble, as if

she were rather coveting your forbearance than conscious of commanding your love."

Miss Benfoyle shook her head significantly. "She may look so, my dear," returned she, "but depend upon it, Miss Mandeville thinks just as much of herself as Lady Georgiana Granville. Why all that hair which falls about in such affected negligence, is studiously arranged after the pictures of King Charles's beauties. Did you ever hear any thing so absurd?"

"Oh, yes, a great deal more; but stay, the quadrille is just over, and Lord Clavers will be seating her; let us make room here that I may have a closer view of her." His Lordship did not, however, avail himself of the seat proposed, but placed his fair partner by the side of Mrs. Boswell, with whom and Agnes he continued in conversation till it was time, he said, to set out in quest of another partner for the ensuing dances. He had not been long gone before the Count de Meurville came over to them.

"I am completing all you men have left undone," exclaimed Mrs. Boswell to him as he approached; "to make Miss Mandeville vain, by telling her all the fine things that are said of her this evening. I assure you her eyes are doing more mischief than Lady Georgiana Granville's."

The Count de Meurville smiled, and glanced at Agnes, who was re-arranging some flowers that had fallen from her bosom. "I suspect," said he, "that Miss Mandeville has not *now* to learn that power."

"If they were black," continued this lively lady, "I should say as they do of those of the Spanish ladies, that they were in mourning for the murders they had committed; but they are my own favourite hue, the beautiful, pensive, purple-blue of starry night!"

"Positively, Mrs. Boswell," said Agnes, "I must run away from you, or you will not leave me one grain of common sense remaining."

"Oh run off, Miss Mandeville as fast as you please," returned the other, with one of her own peculiar laughs; "only take care to take some one along with you:

there's the Count de Meurville, who'll be most happy, I day say, to enter on any fate he may have the honour to share with you."

Agnes blushed, but Mrs. Boswell did not seem to perceive it, and went on—"Seriously speaking," said she, "running off is the pleasantest thing in the world. I ran off with Boswell, and though he was not the man of my choice, but a kind of intermediate between one I hated and one I loved,—ah! I'll not add to the vanity of your sex, Count Meurville, by telling you how much,—it was the pleasantest thing in the world. I was so wondered at and scolded at, and courted and beloved, that whether I were woman or angel I for some time after scarcely knew."

"This is very pretty encouragement you are holding out, Mrs. Boswell," said Agnes; "I do not know what Mamma would say to my being auditor to it."

Mrs. Boswell fixed her eyes upon her, and the smile which lurked about her lips seemed to intimate her vainly endeavouring to repress some observation that would rise to them. "I am very much mistaken, Miss Mandeville," said she at length, "if I shall not one day have to call you a convert to it."

"Oh, don't make any such sad prophecy of me," said Agnes, "for fear, as is sometimes the case, it should realize itself."

"Well, I won't if it displeases you," said the lady, laughing; "but," and she shook her sagacious little head, "I have been always accounted a prophetess, and we shall see, that's all."

"That you are for once a false one, I hope," said Agnes, and stole rather than cast a glance, at De Meurville, as if in expectation he would confirm the hope.

But the Count was, or appeared to be, engaged in disentangling his watch-chains, and the half-indulged, half-repressed smile which hovered about his lips, caused a deeper blush on Agnes's cheeks than all Mrs. Boswell's raillery was able to excite.

"Are you cruel enough, De Meurville," said she, looking up at him, "to unite in such sad prognostications?"

"Ah ! I'll leave him to tell you, my dear," cried Mrs Boswell, starting up and seizing the arm of a young lady near her, of whom she was the chaperon, "and if I mistake not," she continued, looking back and laughing, "he'll do so, with not only the power, but the desire to realize them."

Agnes never felt so confused : had she been on perfectly good terms with De Meurville, she would have felt embarrassed, and endeavoured to laugh off the subject ; but as it was, there was a half seriousness on his part, and of course a restraint on hers, that rendered it uncommonly awkward. De Meurville did not however appear to participate in this confusion, he looked at her as if to fathom the feelings which were uppermost in her heart. "I cannot conceive," at length she exclaimed, a little impatiently, and not wholly without intention of giving him a slight reproof, "what there is in my appearance and manner to excite the fears of all my friends for my future welfare."

"Only what there is, in that of a most attractive women, Agnes," said he.

"And yet," continued she, "without stopping to refute your compliment, how does it happen then that, such and such a person," naming several, "are not objects of equal anxiety ?"

"Perhaps they are," returned De Meurville.

"No ; I know they are not," said she, "and there's Lady Georgiana Granville, who, if any human creature could justify anxiety, would certainly do so ; for, beautiful beyond imagination, she is as unguarded in her manner, and as unreserved in her conversation, as any who have no reason for being otherwise ; and yet Lady Malverton never seems disturbed by apprehensions respecting her."

"I must, in the first place, remind you," said De Meurville, "that our not foreseeing dangers, will not avert them ; and, in the second, observe that I do not conceive the manner you ascribe to Lady Georgiana, and which I believe she possesses, altogether the most dangerous."



"I wish I knew which was the least," said Agnes with a sigh, and casting up her bright eyes as she spoke.

"That in which nothing is implied by what is spoken; or expressed, but what is easy to be understood."

"I once," said she, "conceived that manner mine."

"If it had been," returned he in a lower tone than he had hitherto spoken, "I feel it would never have found its way to my heart."

"And yet you are displeased," said she, "with what you tell me is most attractive to you."

"Only when it is directed to others am I," returned he.

Agnes would have told him that an exclusive manner would argue an exclusive preference, which every thing forbade her from avowing; but she did not know exactly how to intimate it, and was silent.

"I came to ask you to dance," said he, "but I see the quadrille is making up, and fear I am not left time enough to plead."

"You reckoned then," said she, half smiling, "on its requiring some exertion of eloquence?"

He did not immediately reply, but a look more expressive than words, betrayed to her he did. "Have I any chance," at length he whispered.

She shook her head, and sighing rather than pronouncing a negative, he again urged her, "or to tell him the reason of her refusal."

"Oh, I don't know! I am ~~now~~ inclined," said she, "as you told me yesterday evening."

De Meurville's eyes met hers as she spoke, and whether she read there what entitled him to forgiveness, or rendered resentment impossible, the hand he took was no longer denied him, but given with the hope, as well as perhaps the presentiment, that it would one day be his own for ever.

The ball was concluded with an elegant supper, and created, as often happens, diversity of opinions with regard to its agreeability. To the beautiful and admired—to those who had danced with their lovers, and been envied by their rivals—every thing of course was

delightful and agreeable ; but to the plain, unnoticed, and uninterested, all had appeared folly, pride, and pretension. Lady Mandeville insufferably high, and her daughters in the style of their attire, and expensiveness of its materials, outraging delicacy, while they out-dressed nobility.

## CHAPTER XV.

“ Go where we will, this hand in mine,  
Those eyes before me smiling thus ;  
Through good and ill, through storm and shine,  
The world’s a world of love for us.”

MOORE.

*From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.*

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

I am extremely displeased at the saucy imputation contained in your last epistle. How dare you fancy me so dissipated as to throw aside your letters unread ! and declare you can only imagine me now, dressed in the extremity of fashion, at a nine o’clock dinner, with De Meurville by my side ; or dancing quadrilles at day-break ? I assure you, you are greatly mistaken in your suppositions :—we dine for the most part at the moderate hour of six ; and my dancing never extends till morning’s dawn. The latter is, indeed, usually put an end to at an earlier hour than I could desire, as far as regards myself ; for my mother is so uneasy about my getting too thin, and De Meurville (though he dare not confess it to any one but me) equally so, that professedly to oblige her, and secretly to please him also, I sit down after twelve o’clock to look on at an amusement I am dying to continue. Apropos to De Meurville ; you must know I had the other evening an adventure with him, which has made me ashamed to look at him ever

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since. We had all, as I thought, retired to our apartments, and I, instead of undressing, had sat over my fire reading, till past one ; when, wishing for the second volume of the work in which I was engaged, I determined on descending for it. Guided by the light of the moon, which gleamed through the windows and lit up the passages, I flew down without a candle, and like a thoughtless girl ran into the midst of the library, before I perceived another light than that of the moon illumined — another figure than my own occupied it. Swifter a thousand times than I entered, was I about to return, when De Meurville sprang forward and caught me in his arms. Confused, not only from the lateness of the hour, but that the having had a slight coldness with him for some days before gave this meeting the appearance of being a premeditated one for reconciliation, I did not immediately speak ; and he construing it into a continued expression of displeasure, asked me, “How much longer he was to be excluded from my favour?”

“Oh, only so long as it is a matter of indifference to you,” said I ; and I am afraid rather saucily, for he appeared displeased, and asked me “What I meant?”

“Only so long,” said I, endeavouring to make myself more intelligible, “as my society is not a matter of sufficient consequence to you, to make you appear sorry for its loss, or solicitous for its recovery.”

“You do not know me, Agnes,” said he, “long as we have been acquainted ; if you think that even to regain your regard I would condescend to excite your compassion !”

“Nor can you suppose I would desire it,” said I ; “but if you are too proud, either to appear concerned by its absence or desirous for its restoration, I must own to you, you would do well not to value it : for I have too much of the woman in my composition not to expect to be courted, before I am conquered ; to be wooed, before I am won.”

“And am I not courting you?” said he, endeavouring to meet my eyes as he spoke ; “am I not imploring for a restoration of your regard ? Ah, Agnes !” he

presently continued, "I sometimes fear it is with you, as the song you were singing a little while since expresses it :—

"Love dwells in every outward part,  
But, ah ! it never reached thine heart."

Involuntarily I looked at him ; for that he could make such a supposition indeed surprised me ; and whether he interpreted my glance into a reproach at his doing so, or what, I know not : it was returned by one from him which could not but make me forget all past indifference, and in a moment we were again the best of friends.

"I was sitting up here to write a letter," said he presently ; "the library is to me the most inspiring place."

"Your theme, then," observed I, "was not in itself all powerful."

"And yet it was," said he ; "for I was writing of the woman I love."

"Oh, well ! let me not any longer disturb you," said I ; "I am afraid, as it is, I have occasioned the remainder of the portrait being less favourable than the commencement."

"No ; you have only added new embellishments," said he, "by reminding me of new beauties ; and the conclusion of my picture will not be inferior to the beginning, however unworthy both may be of the original."

"Well, hand me 'Dunallan,'" said I ; "and do not tell your friend of a young lady who came to visit you at midnight ; for I am sure he would not in her recognise," and I hesitated,— "any one who was dear to you !" —at length I said, extending my hand to his.

De Meurville caught it, and when he would have resigned it I know not ; but dreadfully afraid of being detected down at such an hour, I snatched it from him, and telling him, "if I could not trust it with him for a moment, he never could expect it for life," ran away.

We have had the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana Granville stopping here this last week. I believe you are acquainted with both by name; the former is an elegant and agreeable woman; the latter so beautiful as to throw every thing within the influence of her attraction into the shade: with eyes and hair of a luxuriant auburn colour, and a complexion to whose dazzling brilliancy comparing the snow and the carnation is no exaggerated metaphor. We have of course done every thing to render their visit agreeable; and the fineness of the weather and sociability of the company happening to be stopping here, have favoured our design; but had it been otherwise, had the former been unpleasant and the latter uninteresting, there is so much of mind in Lady Malverton and her daughter, as would render them independent of either circumstance; and enable them to enjoy a domestic circle in the library, with books and work, as well as they could adorn a more brilliant one in the drawing-room, or a gayer party out.

Since commencing this, a most delightful plan has been resolved on for final execution. Mr. and Mrs. Damer, who have long had a little tour in contemplation, have been determined, by De Meurville's expressing his intention to travel in Scotland and Ireland during the autumn, to make that their route also; and with him, to look at the places rendered interesting by the pen of the Scotch Novelist, whose works will be read with redoubled pleasure amidst the very scenes that gave them birth. In Ireland, which they propose crossing to by Port Patrick, they first visit the Giant's Causeway, then the Lakes of Killarney, and Dublin; from which latter they cross to London.

"All very well," you *will* (and may well say,) "but what is there in it so delightful to Agnes, since it will deprive her of De Meurville?" Nothing delightful, indeed, if it did. But no, Caroline has insisted on my accompanying her, and we all leave here the beginning of next week. I forgot to tell you that Mr. and Mrs. Vigers' third daughter, Mrs. Arlington, with her husband

and family, which consists of a son and daughter, are settled in the neighbourhood of the Giant's Causeway, and to them we are to have a letter of introduction. From what I have heard of this lady, I imagine she was the beauty of the three Miss Vigers', but made a marriage inferior to her sisters, though respectable, when she married Captain (now Colonel) Arlington. Indeed, Lady Malverton hinted as much when she was one day speaking of her sister to me: "Emily," said she, "threw herself away; I hope, Agnes, you'll never do any thing so silly: or in haste to become a bride, forget that you also entail being a wife."

Smiling, I declared "I never should." And De Meurville, who was standing by, pronounced it a pity "that lovers should ever be married."

"Yes," said the Countess, laughing, "for the credit of man, 'twould be well they never were. With them, frequently the fondness of the lover ends with the name; and the wife is introduced to tempers which the mistress never knew."

"And is not the husband sometimes similarly enlightened, Lady Malverton?" asked De Meurville: "does not he sometimes discover faults of temper, which as a lover he never guessed at?"

"Sometimes," said Lady Malverton; "but for the most part man's indifference first elicits woman's foibles: with possession of his object ends his excitement to please it; and when that object brings with it (as a wife must) trouble, anxiety, expense, he too soon begins to prefer every other to it."

"Ah, no! Lady Malverton," cried de Meurville feelingly; "every trouble she occasions him must be an additional endearment, as proving her dependence upon him; every anxiety more than repaid by her love, and every expense but the due of a creature who has bestowed on him a happiness beyond all price!"

"You talk like a lover," said her Ladyship, smiling.

"I speak as I feel," returned Clifford; "were the woman I loved suffering through poverty, I would beg with her if I could not relieve her; through injustice &

would defend her; from unkindness I would protect her; and if the world forsook her, I would be to her the world!"

"To the Count de Meurville's wife then," remarked Lady Malverton, "that blessing would ever be dearest, for which she was most dependent on *him*!"

De Meurville raised his eyes of "dewy light" on me; and I was thinking how his romantic sentiments would please my Catharine: by the by, you are not unknown to him by character. At present he loves you for my sake, but when he is acquainted with you, he will do it for your own. I have sometimes read him parts of your letters to me, (do not be afraid—he is a very lenient judge) and he conceives you, from them, all that is amiable and lovely and good—all, as I tell him, that you are. Farewell, my dearest Catharine, I hope we shall meet in a few days; and that you will make up your mind to remain with me during the whole of our short stay in London, when I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to Mr. Damer, his amiable wife, and the *most* amiable and lovely of men.

I am ever, &c. &c.,

AGNES MANDEVILLE.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Her faults he knew not—love is always blind,  
 But every charm revolved within his mind;  
 Her tender age, her form divinely fair,  
 Her easy motion, her attractive air,  
 Her sweet behaviour, her enchanting face,  
 Her moving softness, and majestic grace."

THE beginning of January found the Malvertons and Mandevilles in London; the latter came up as usual for their winter campaign, the former to make preparations for going to India; the Countess having received let-

ters from her husband, expressing his wish that she and her daughters should join him in the East.

Since coming to town, Lady Georgiana had been paid great attention by the Marquess of Glenallan (uncle to that Mr. Douglas who stopped for a few days at Abbeville during the summer;) and the Countess began seriously to reflect whether, if he should make proposals for her daughter, it would not be for the happiness of the latter to accept them. His Lordship was certainly more than double her age; plain in person, and weak in character. But to his elevated rank he united an Indian fortune and incomparable temper; and if marrying at eighteen a beautiful and accomplished girl to a man little calculated to inspire love, however he might gratitude and esteem, was a sacrifice, it was one better to be made than to take her to a climate with which her delicate constitution could not long contend, or leave her unmarried in England, where, whether she was in the retirement which residing with Lady Malverton's friends would have afforded, or mixing in the gayer scenes of life, she would be exposed to dangers which, as Lord Glenallan's wife, she would be at least preserved from. Impressed with these convictions, and finding Georgiana in no way averse to the Marquess, Lady Malverton, after many struggles between her parental and prudential feelings, at last determined on answering favourably the application for her daughter's hand, which it was no way doubtful Lord Glenallan waited but opportunity to make. He was constantly at Malverton House, sometimes with a request to Lady Georgiana and her sister to ride with him in the Park, at other times to inquire after their health, if they had been up late the night before, but more frequently with no apparent object at all, but to look at Georgiana, whose very presence seemed to make him happy. Of his partiality for the young lady there was equally discussion in the hall and drawing-room, as a letter from the Marquess's own man to a fellow-servant in the country will prove. After writing on different subjects, he says, "But Tom, I have not yet told you the best



piece of news; which is, that my lord is certainly going to be married, and to the loveliest young lady you ever in your life saw: *he* is, to my thinking, comely enough; but *she*, why, when she appears, it is like the rising of the sun on the blue mountains of Glenallan! And so affable and so kind as she is! 'Twas but the other day, as my Lord was handing her, beautifully dressed, to her carriage, she turned to me, who was standing near, and inquired how my cold was, when I never guessed she knew of my having one at all. So I bowed and thanked her Ladyship, and told her as how it was better. And my Lord laughed, and said London didn't agree with me: and then told her, without caring for me to hear, though I did, that I was his most faithful servant, and he couldn't do without me. 'I hope,' says she, smiling like an angel, 'that he'll soon be your Georgiana's also.' And my Lord looked in good faith as if he hoped it too, and he put her into the carriage, and told her it depended on her. Now would you believe it, Thomas, sweet and amiable as Lady Georgiana is, there are some of our people here, unkind enough to say that the hour in which my lord first saw her will prove the most unhappy he ever knew. But they wouldn't say it had they ever seen her as I have, when I've been over at Malverton house, sitting for a whole evening by the side of my Lord, when younger gentlemen and handsomer gentlemen have been soliciting her to dance; and when my Lady Alicia, her sister, but not half so handsome as herself, has been dancing and flirting. No; while she looks so innocent, I cannot but believe her amiable; and though she has no fortune, it is of no consequence, for my Lord has more than enough for her and himself: and I hope I shall yet see her mistress of the bonny braes of Glenallan.

No more at present from, dear Tom,

Yours, &c. &c.,

ARTHUR M'CULLOCH.

*From the Marquess of Glenallan to the Earl of Arabin.*

MY DEAR LORD,

Every thing is going on prosperously in this quarter : the lovely Georgiana has consented to be mine, and I am the happiest of men ! Were it possible that you and your sweet sister, Lady Isabel, could come up to town, how happy should we be to have you present at our wedding. If that is impossible, I shall certainly comply with your request, and make to Arabin Castle one of our first visits, as it will be one of our most agreeable. You are right in imagining that the future Marchioness of Glenallan would grace the halls of Holyrood ; but wrong in supposing that my Georgiana will not *infinitely* prefer retirement in the shades of Glenallan. To the latter, by the by, we shall set off on the day we are married, and remain at it for a few days. Douglas, who is probably to meet us there, will no longer find in me the indefatigable sportsman, willing to follow him from daybreak to nightfall, over hill and dale, with my gun and dogs ; but the happy and attentive husband, enjoying with his present wife, all that felicity he once believed buried in the grave of his late one.

In haste I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours, &c. &c.

GLENALLAN.

*From Lady Georgiana Granville to Miss M Dougal.*

MY DEAR JULIET,

You have probably heard first from every one else, what, as most concerning, you ought to have heard first from me ; namely, that I am going to be married. To tell you what commenced my conquest of Lord Glenallan's heart, I cannot ; for I am sure I do not know. I am only aware of what concluded it,—my appearance when dressed in the likeness of an Angel.

In the morning of the day which, as it afterwards turned out, decided my future destiny, I had playfully

appealed to him to fix the character I should assume at a fancy ball in the evening. He determined in favour of that of an Angel; and as I observed every one appeared in the character most opposite to her own, I made no objection to it; but, dressed in muslin, with a sky-blue scarf floating through my hair, (which, carelessly confined, hung in ringlets about my shoulders,) descended at ten o'clock to the drawing-room, expecting to find my mother, sister, &c. waiting my coming to depart, when, instead of them or any one else, I found myself alone, extended on the sofa, with no light in the room but what the fire afforded—Lord Glenallan.

"You beautiful, divine creature!" exclaimed he, springing up and throwing himself before me; "can heaven itself produce your prototype? No, not heaven or earth: and learn, all perfect woman! that you are, and have from the first moment I saw you, been dearer to me than either."

"Rise, rise, my Lord," cried I; "it is a fellow-creature you address, and this language is impious."

"Never," said the Marquess, "till your lips have decided my fate—till this hand by rejecting mine has made me the most miserable, or by accepting, the most happy of men."

I scarce knew what to reply: I believe I told him that if he could gain my mother's consent, he need not despair of her daughter's.

Whatever I said, it was sufficient to throw him into raptures, which were fortunately interrupted by the entrance of my grandinamma, the Countess Dowager, and Alicia: the former in character of Meg Merrilies, which her tall, bony figure and marked features well enabled her to personify; the latter somewhat similarly attired, but representing a youthful Gipsy. My mother and uncle soon joined us; one dressed as a Nun, the other as a Jew, and we set out for the ball. While there, I might in reality have passed for an Angel, or some unearthly thing, for all my thoughts were abstracted from the scene around me; and my prospects as the wife elect of Lord Glenallan alone occupied my

imagination. Among a thousand others, I saw the Mandevilles there, the girls as Circassian Slaves, their mother as a Sultana. The gentlemen of their party were not in character, at least the Count de Meurville and two Mr. Mandevilles were not: whether they had more in their train I cannot tell. The former is certainly the most interesting of men. "Oh, that *he* were Lord Glenallan or I Agnes Mandeville!" I could not help inwardly exclaiming; as the latter, with the Count, came up to speak to me. De Meurville, looking as he always does, so dignified, and yet so mild—she so artless and yet so lovely! Ah! Juliet, he is the kind of man with whom I am convinced I could be happy in *any* country; while with the Marquess I shall only enjoy myself in that which is the centre of his consequence and mine.

. . . . .

I continue my letter, after having thrown it aside for a few days, but only to make a short addition before concluding it. My time is completely taken up in preparations for my marriage, which is to be solemnized this day fortnight. The royal personages who presided at my birth will grace my nuptials; and the hand of the King of England will give away her whom the lips of the Prince of Wales first named. Yesterday I sat for the last time for my picture, which makes me out a thousand times handsomer than I really am (though of course not half so handsome as I appear in Lord Glenallan's eyes.) This morning, I, with my mother, sister, &c., spent entirely at Hamlet's arranging about the setting of my diamonds: under mine, I now include those which belonged to the late Marchioness of Glenallan; as well as those which were presented by the Prince at my birth; altogether they form a magnificent collection. Apropos to the former; she may have been very good, but I greatly suspect, a very dowdy, spiritless sort of personage. All things shall be widely different under my administration, to what they were under hers. Glenallan Castle shall no longer in sullen,

silent dignity be illuminated with setting suns, or shall melancholy, desolate galleries revibrate the passing foot-step.—No, every sun shall shine on festivity and joy ! Every day shall be delightful—every night a jubilee ! The halls shall ring to dancing ! And the woods to the cries of the huntsmen !

“ I'll call on Echo to rejoice.”

Farewell, my dearest Juliet ; when next you hear of, or see me, it will probably be as Lady Glenallan, but whether bearing that, or any other name, I shall ever be the same to you.

Believe me, &c. &c.

GEORGIANA GRANVILLE.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

“ Did I not hear him, as he prest  
The frail-toned trembler to a breast,  
Which she had doom'd to sin and strife,  
Call her,—think what ?—his life ! His life !  
Ye—such the love-taught name, the first  
That ruin'd man to woman gave.”

MOORE.

“ I NEVER saw white moss-roses before,” said De Meurville, as on the morning of the masquerade he was indolently leaning against the chimney-piece in the Mandevilles' drawing-room ; and looking at some Agnes wore in her bosom.”

“ You are in love with these flowers,” observed she, carelessly taking them from her dress to give him ; “ you have done nothing but notice them since you came in. They are a few my brother, who breakfasted in the country this morning, brought me. I suppose they were reared in a hot-house.”

“ I'm in love, Agnes,” said De Meurville, throwing himself on the sofa, “ with her whom *those* flowers

adorn ; with her who wants not adornment to be more lovely and beautiful than my imagination could have pictured a woman, or my fondest wishes believed her."

"Clifford," cried she, with that sweet and

‘ Self-betraying air,  
Which woman loved and flatter’d, love to wear,’

"Have you forgotten so soon the lecture I gave you the other evening ?"

"No," returned he with a sigh ; "but though it was very eloquent, it was very inapplicable ; for I never did nor ever could flatter you. All that I say is, must be truth."

"Well ! don't talk of me at all then," said Agnes, "or I shall be afraid to be alone with you."

"You, and you only, Agnes," replied De Meurville, looking down at an apron she was spangling, "occupy my thoughts, whether when we are alone together, or mixing in the midst of a crowded assembly. Engaged in the latter, I can but look at you, love you, attend to your most trifling wants ; but why, when enjoying the former, should I be debarred of speaking to you of yourself, from telling you how dear you are to me ; that if you are charming in the eyes of others, you are more, —oh, how much more !—in mine."

"Ask your own heart, De Meurville," said she, "why I debar you from that, or any other pleasure it is in my power to afford you."

He was silent.

"Let us, said she, removing the hand with which he was gently endeavouring to disengage her from her work, "let us talk on some other subject :—shall you come with us to the masquerade this evening ?"

"No, I think not ; I dine out. Besides," added he, playfully, "if I did, you'd be out of character in being a Slave. I should rather go as one, and my Agnes as a Princess."

"Oh ! you wouldn't answer for a slave," said she, in the same tone ; "you'd be too proud for that."

"Was I ever proud to you ?" asked De Meurville, fondly.

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"No, not to me, certainly," said Agnes, and she sighed.

"Tell me," cried Clifford, "have you the slightest, remotest wish that I should go, and I will, were it only to watch over, and protect you."

"I think you may as well," said she, with assumed indifference, "for it may amuse you; and your being in or out of character, is immaterial. My brothers will be the latter, Mr. Damer merely a domino."

"And his wife?"

"Oh! poor Caroline is frightened at the idea of going at all, and wants to stay at home."

"Apropos to her," said the Count de Meurville; "I was glad, Agnes, you did not take part with those who were laughing at her the other evening, when she had left the room."

"I must be very ungrateful," observed she, "if I *had*, if I *ever* could again, after her kindness to me during our late journey."

"The woman is mistaken, said the Count De Meurville, seriously; "who ever thinks to rise by depreciating another—mistaken, indeed! if 'tis *man* she seeks to please. But, Agnes, I must bid you farewell," added he, rising quickly; "I made an appointment to call on a gentleman at four, and 'tis just that hour now; I had no idea of its being so late:—"

'With thee conversing, I forgot all time.'"

"Well, may we reckon on seeing you in the evening?" inquired she, as she extended her hand to meet his.

"Oh, yes certainly! wherever you are will be my attraction. In the meantime, remember me to your mother and sisters: they have had a fine morning for driving." So saying, the Count de Meurville left her, and Agnes went to the window to look at him as he walked down the street.

The autumnal excursion had fully enlightened Mr. and Mrs. Damer as to the sentiments entertained by Agnes and the Count de Meurville for each other; and

having no interest in either betraying or encouraging their attachment, it had every opportunity for increase and developement, which being constantly thrown together (sometimes in the most romantic situation, at all times in the most unreserved and familiar) could produce. Mr. Damer, with the thoughtlessness and generosity of youth, considered nothing but love of importance in married life, and the idea of separating lovers, because their union would occasion the loss of fortune on one side and the breaking of a vow on the other, he would have laughed at as absurd ; and Mrs. Damer, though she might have been necessitated to bear, could not be supposed so insensible to the unkindness she had experienced since her introduction into the Mandeville family, as to exert herself in averting an event which she thought it very justifiable to presume Lady Mandeville might have foreseen, when she threw so completely in the way of her daughter, a man interesting and accomplished as the Count de Meurville.

The masquerade to which the Mandevilles went in the evening, and at which Lady Georgiana appeared in the character of an Angel, presented the usual motley assemblage of figures. Here a Flower-girl persecuted you with her nosegays ; there a Watchman stunned you with his loud vociferations of the hour. Sometimes you were haunted by a Fortune-teller, pertinaciously insisting on acquainting you with your destiny, at others dodged by a Pedlar displaying his pack. Now a whining Beggar solicited your charity ; and now a Sultana almost set you on fire as she passed in a blaze of jewelery.

But it was a figure far different from the latter, and unlike the former, that attracted, and from the moment of attracting, engrossed the attention of Agnes Mandeville. It was that of a woman, short, masked, and possessing a voice whose shrill, sepulchral tones were exerted in the execution of some sea-songs and dying confessions, which she continued to scream about the room.

From the moment of her entrance, Agnes found her-



self the object of the Ballad-singer's particular notice. At first she disregarded it, and attributed it to the peculiarity of her own costume; but then each of her sisters were equally striking, and they were disregarded. What this could mean she knew not; but she was glad to take the arm of De Meurville, who presently joined their party in company with another gentleman.

"The Miss Mandevilles in chains; and *deservedly*!" cried the latter; whom the disguise of a friar's cowl and cloak did not prevent them from recognising as Colonel Blomberg. "I am not sorry to see those conquered themselves who so often conquered others."

"But I am surprised," cried Lady Mandeville, "to see you performing saint who have so often played sinner."

"Oh, every one is reforming now; and I among the number."

"Thou dost well, friend," said a Quaker, as she passed.

"But thou hast done better, friend, I suspect," returned the Friar; "thou hast no need for repentance."

"Can you, and you, and you say that?" sung the ballad-singer abruptly, as she rushed through their party.

"Confound the old hag," cried Sidney; "what does she mean?"

"Ask him, ask her!" said the woman, looking back with a wild and satanic smile at the Count de Meurville and Agnes.

"Foolish woman!" said the former, laughing. But the latter trembled so, that De Meurville asked her aside, if she supposed it "a voice from Vienna?"

"It is a voice," returned Agnes, as she, the Count, and Madelina took a turn about the room, "that penetrates to my heart."

"Yes, the woman's a great bore," observed Miss Mandeville carelessly; as with her black eyes glaring through her mask, the ballad-singer crossed them, chanting a low and gloomy death-song. "But see

those admirable figures!" added she, pointing to a Jew and a Sailor who stood in converse.

"If Mr. Douglas is in England," said Agnes, "that Sailor is he."

"And if he is not?" said the Count de Meurville.

"Why, then it is the person in the world most like him."

"There is one," said Miss Mandeville, looking at Lady Georgiana, "whom no one in the world is like; who is the very divinity she is personifying."

"It can't be said," observed a distracted Poet, as he overheard her remark,

*"That fools rush in where angels dare not tread."*

"I think not," said Miss Mandeville, as they stopped to speak to Lady Georgiana.

"I'm looking for my mother," observed her Ladyship, laughing; "Lord Glenallan tells me she has changed her dress."

"You've a fortune-teller beside you," said the Count de Meurville; "perhaps she'll assist you in the discovery."

"Let me first introduce her as Lady Alicia Granville, to you and your companions, and then try her skill in necromancy," returned Lady Georgiana.

"You do well to introduce her, indeed," said Miss Mandeville; "I shouldn't have recognized your sister disguised by a mask."

"You'd be at a still greater loss to recognize her mother," observed Lord Glenallan, "though I'll give you a clue by saying she's in our neighbourhood."

"Provoking man!" cried Lady Alicia playfully; "can't you point her out?"

"She is not, surely," said Miss Mandeville, "that figure in the red cloak? personifying, I believe, Meg Merrilies."

"Oh, no; that's my youthful grandmother," replied Lady Alicia.

While the two parties continued engaged in conver-

zation, Agnes alone, as she hung on the arm of her lover, was silently and thoughtfully observing the conduct of the Ballad-singer ; who, though she affected to be engrossed in singing and hawking the songs contained in her basket, was watching the Count de Meurville and Agnes with an attention and, as far as could be judged from the expression of her eyes and mouth (which the mask left displayed) a malignity the most remarkable. Wild as was the conjecture, the idea that it might be Annette Dettinghorffe would frequently cross the mind of Agnes. The former might have heard of, or suspect the Count de Meurville's attachment in England, and have come over to judge of its truth. Annette answered in person, from all accounts, to the woman before her, and in mind she had often heard her pronounced capable of any exertion. There was a foreign accent in her voice which favoured the idea ; and De Meurville's not discovering her, in no way destroyed it, for he was engaged in talking and laughing with every one else. The more Agnes looked at the Ballad-singer, the more were her suspicions confirmed. It was no common gaze returned hers ; it was no friendly smile beheld her evident agitation ; it was such a gaze and such a smile as Satan wore when he beheld our first parents in Paradise ; and Agnes sunk beneath its dire expression. But her fears amounted to terror, when walking across the room with the Count De Meurville, the Ballad-singer suddenly brushed closely beside her, and whispered "Annete !" She started ; and by her emotion recalled the Count, whose attention had been arrested by the entrance of some figures grotesquely dressed.

"You are faint, you are ill !" said he quickly, seeing her pale as ashes ; " what is the matter ? Let us leave this room."

" I wish I had never entered it," returned she faintly.

" Has any thing, has any one alarmed you, my love ?" asked he fondly, as they went out on a lighted gallery.

" Oh ! that woman, De Meurville," cried Agnes, in

a voice of terror, "how she looked at me, how she looked at you ! I shall never, never forget it. And her voice—oh ! that I had never heard it."

"What woman, my angel ?" inquired he as they turned into an apartment which opened from the gallery. "Is it that horrible Ballad-singer who has frightened you so."

"She has almost deprived me of reason," said Agnes, as she and Clifford hung over the fire-place ; "I wish I was at home—I wish I had never come here."

"My life, my love !" exclaimed De Meurville.

"Your life, your love !" repeated a voice behind them.

"She is there," said Agnes, with a scream ; and she threw herself into the arms of the Count de Meurville.

He turned quickly round—"Begone, for Heaven's sake !" he cried, to the Ballad-singer, who was standing in the midst of the room ; "you are destroying this lady's peace."

"Your life, your love," said the woman, in low and ominous accents, "shall live to loathe your very name !" And so saying she quitted the room.

"First must loathe her own," murmured Agnes, faintly.

"Don't let that fiend alarm you," said De Meurville ; "she's mad, I believe," he added, smiling, and trying to rally her spirits.

Agnes affected to believe so too, not wishing to infuse into De Meurville's mind the suspicions which racked her own, for they might be unfounded, and if on investigation they proved to be, it would but convey to her lover the mortifying conviction of her conscience accusing her of some impropriety in her conduct towards him, by having conjured up a phantom to reprove her with it. And whether it was Annette or any one else who had hitherto haunted her, when she and De Meurville returned to the room in which the masquerade was held, the person had disappeared ; never more, as it afterwards turned out, to meet Agnes, but in circumstances the most dire and distressing under which woman could meet woman.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*"What winning graces, what celestial mien !  
She moves a Goddess, and she looks a queen."*

No lover was ever more eager to obtain the object of his affections than Lord Glenallan to possess Lady Georgiana Granville. Time seemed eternal but when employed in preparations for the period which was to render her his ; amusements insipid, till they could be enjoyed with her as his wife, and mercenary considerations contemptible, when the blessing to be obtained was so invaluable. In short, he asked but life—life with Georgiana, and imagined, that in contributing to her happiness he should for ever ensure his own. Mistaken man ! he was yet to prove the worthlessness of the prize for which he panted. However, the day, the hour at length arrived ; and Georgiana assumed that title, the possession of which was to atone for every enjoyment it did not comprehend in itself. At nine o'clock her marriage was performed in the very apartment of Malverton-house, which eighteen years ago had witnessed her christening, and in a manner the most awfully impressive. How many mingled emotions contended in the bosom of Lady Malverton during its celebration. How many past scenes, in which Georgiana had been her companion, crowded to her recollection, as if only to enhance the regrets which the prospect of the future afforded ; when she would be separated for years, if not for ever, from the daughter over whom from infancy she had watched so fondly ; and divided by oceans, her fate would become as doubtful to her mother as it was important. From reflections such as these, Lady Malverton was roused by the whole room

ringing in congratulations to the Marchioness of Glenallan: and then she would have given worlds to burst into tears, and embrace her once more as Georgiana Granville. But such an effusion of feeling would have been inadmissible—for royalty presided; and the Countess retired to her own apartment as soon as the commencement of the ball which ensued, allowed her to do it unobserved. In the meantime Lady Glenallan admitted no such reflections to alloy her happiness; but, beautiful as an angel, was enjoying the admiration and receiving the compliments of all around her,—every attitude of hers pronounced more graceful than the former—every look more lovely than the last. On the following morning, the Marquess and Marchioness, with Lady Alicia Granville, set out for Glenallan Castle in Scotland, to which, as thinking very highly of its beauties himself, the Marquess was anxious to introduce his young bride. The weather was very fine, and Lady Glenallan enjoyed a journey rendered easy and agreeable by every comfort and indulgence which rank, fortune, and a doating husband, could bestow. They were met a few miles from the Castle by Mr Douglas, whom business had called from London about the period of his uncle's marriage, but who had been in town a short time preceding, and at the masquerade, when he was recognised by one of the Miss Mandevilles.

"I have just dispersed," cried Douglas, after shaking hands with the Marchioness and Lady Alicia, "a parcel of people who were assembled a little farther on, with the intention of taking the horses from the carriage; they were armed with ropes, &c. for the purpose: and I thanked them in your and Lady Glenallan's name for the kindness they proposed, but I knew you would dispense with the performance."

"You did well," said the Marquess, "we would much rather proceed without delay. Indeed, I am afraid," added he, looking fondly at his bride, who, muffled up in beautiful furs, had sunk back in a corner of the carriage, "that Georgiana is nearly overcome with fatigue and cold as it is."

The Marchioness, with a languid smile, disclaimed being so; and Mr. Douglas, after informing her that Lady Penelope (alluding to his aunt) would have tea and coffee ready to refresh her, rode back to the Castle to announce their coming.

It was a clear, starry night at the latter end of February, on which the travellers entered Glenallan; and passing through its dark umbrageous shades, with no noise to disturb the stillness which prevailed, but the hooting of owls and the dashing of torrents, Lady Glenallan felt impressions of sadness she was at a loss to account for. And the trifling conversation kept up between her husband and sister seemed irrelevant to the majesty of Nature, as it was uncongenial to the elevation of her own feelings. But in a few minutes they stopped at the entrance of the Castle, and lights, noise, and bustle dissipated these ideas. The hall was lined with servants, all anxious to welcome the return of their master; and those who had not seen, to behold the far-famed beauty of his bride. Somewhat exhausted by the journey, but beautiful and interesting, Lady Glenallan, hanging on the arm of her husband, passed like a princess through the admiring group, and was introduced by the Marquess to Lady Penelope Douglas, his maiden sister, who, stiff as buckram, stood at the door of an apartment at the upper end of the hall. This lady had been very averse to the idea of her brother's marrying, and consequently prepared to meet his bride with no very partial eyes. But Lady Glenallan would have disarmed a demon's wrath, while looks were her pleaders, and even the frozen heart of Lady Penelope was softened on beholding her. She no longer wondered at her brother's infatuation, however she might regret it, and wished his wife "welcome, most welcome, to Glenallan Castle."

Assembled in a comfortable room, and around a blazing fire, the evening passed cheerfully away. Lady Penelope, aware that her future residence at the Castle, and enjoyment of its comforts, would entirely depend on the pleasure of its new mistress, was from policy in-

glined to make herself agreeable. Lady Alicia, who as the sister of Lady Glenallan, appeared a plain woman, but who, as almost any one else's would have passed for a pretty one, was lively and pleasant; the Marquess, of course the happiest of men, and Douglas, high in health and spirits, laughed and talked at and on any subject. For Lady Glenallan he was drawing an animated sketch of the desertion of the neighbourhood she was come into, when his uncle stopped him with—"Come, come, Douglas, you shan't frighten her with this gloomy description of yours."

The Marchioness smiled. "Unfortunately for its succeeding in frightening me," said she, "Mr. Douglas once drew so bright a picture of the beauties of Glenallan, as to convince me that the person who could enjoy them would never wish to ~~stay~~ beyond them."

"How little I then thought," observed Douglas, in a tone of retrospection, "that that person would ever be you! How little I could have hoped it!" he added in a lower tone.

The Marchioness and Lady Alicia, feeling themselves fatigued after their journey, early made a movement for retiring, and Lady Penelope conducted them to their apartments by staircases and galleries so grand as to impress Lady Glenallan with a very magnificent idea of the mansion over which she was mistress, and anticipate with pleasure a survey of it in the morning.

Without fatiguing our readers with an individual sketch of every day passed by the Marchioness at Glenallan, it will be sufficient to say that the impressions she made during the fortnight of her residence there were in the highest degree favourable. Nothing could exceed the condescension both of her and of her lord. In the latter indeed, as customary, it was less remarkable; but in her, whom report had represented possessing height of manner, and pride of beauty, it was as unexpected as it was gratifying. On Sunday, she and the Marquess, with the rest of the family, attended divine service in the neighbourhood, and invited the clergyman to return with them to dinner. In the evening,



prayers were regularly conducted in the Castle chapel, during the intervals of which Lady Glenallan performed sacred music on the organ.

Mr. Douglas had not exaggerated in his description of the neighbourhood: it was indeed a most deserted one, and though every family within the distance of twenty miles came to wait on the Marchioness, their number did not exceed five or six. Her Ladyship returned their visits with all the ceremony and appendages suitable to her exalted rank; but her greater delight was, when she and her sister, divested of formality, and the distinctions of dress, could ride and walk about with the Marquess and Mr. Douglas, among the romantic scenery of and surrounding Glenallan Castle. Among cliffs and precipices and woods and waterfalls, she was often amused to behold herself!—herself, to whom if it had been a few weeks ago foretold she would have been there, she would have laughed at the supposition. From rambles such as these they usually returned to a late dinner, at which there was, on most days, the addition of a few gentlemen.

The morning, however, at length arrived, on which the terrace before Glenallan exhibited formidable signs of preparations for departure, and postillions, trunks, &c., were seen in all directions. The Marchioness, whose heart was hitherto unvitiated by the world, could not leave without regret a place where she had spent few indeed, but happy days; and when Douglas was leading her to the carriage, which was to convey her away from it, she suddenly turned once more to Lady Penelope, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Let me bid you again farewell; I shall never forget your kindness to me; no, never! And farewell!" she continued, looking around her with streaming eyes, "farewell dear, lovely Glenallan; soon, very soon, will I return to your sweet scenery!" The Marquess threw his arm around her, and hurried her to the carriage; Lady Alicia followed, and Douglas, who was to accompany them back to town, mounted his horse and galloped forward, while Lady Penelope stood at the hall-door

till they were out of sight, and then re-entered the Castle with a melancholy face, foreboding that Lady Glenallan would never return to it the unsophisticated creature she left it. No, she was too beautiful—too attractive, to render that probable—not to say possible. And yet, if it were otherwise, she would, in the opinion of all she left behind, be little less than an archangel ruined.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

"He spoke, and attention watched his lips—he reasoned, and conviction closed his periods."

RASSELAS.

"I AM come to know," said the Count de Meurville, as one Sunday evening he entered the drawing-room, where, just come up from the dining-parlour, Lady Mandeville, her daughters, and Mrs. Damer were assembled, "if you are any of you inclined to hear the Honourable and Rev. Stapleton Montfort preach to-night?"

"Certainly," said Lady Mandeville, "if you thought it possible that we could get in at the Conduit chapel, where he is to be heard."

"Oh! I'll undertake to promise you shall," replied the Count; "for I know a lady who has a seat there, and who will be very happy to accommodate you."

"I fear we shall be late," said her Ladyship, looking at her watch; "however, some of us will put on our things, and as it is a fine night I think we may walk there."

Accordingly, she, Madelina, and Mrs. Damer, well muffled up, and escorted by the Count de Meurville, and another gentleman or two, set out. They found the chapel, as they expected, crowded to the last degree; and it was with difficulty they made their way to the seat appointed, which was in the gallery. Prayers

were concluding as they entered, and in a few minutes the preacher appeared. Every murmur of disturbance that had not hitherto ceased was at this moment hushed : he possessed indeed a form calculated to inspire awe in the most indifferent beholder ; eyes whose soul-searching expression seemed capable of reading the inmost recesses of the heart ; and a voice whose deep thrilling accents must, for a time at least, arrest the most wandering imagination, or still the most violent passions which could disturb the human bosom. For the text of his discourse, he pronounced the solemn words, " I know that my redeemer liveth : " and then proceeded to observe, that though he made the supposition of every one there present entertaining this belief, of his addressing no one unhappy enough to doubt that his Saviour lived, he would yet call their attention to the uselessness of professing such a belief if it were uninfluencing to their conduct ; the inefficacy of remembering Christ as their Redeemer, if they forgot that He would also be their Judge. On the contrary, he said, it is in the latter character we should, for the most part, consider Him ; and then this vain delusive world—this world, which in its happiest moments, arrayed in its most endearing joys, is but the wretched prototype of that to which we are hastening—would have less power to attract us to evil ; we should remember how contemptible it would one day render us in His sight ! in the sight of men and of angels ! He drew an animated picture of the delusions of life ; its transient joys, its bitter sorrows, its endless disappointments. " What ! What ! " he emphatically exclaimed, " is this world to us that we should so much value it ? What enjoyment—what pleasure can it produce, take it from East to West, from North to South, for which it is worth while to sacrifice eternity ? "

" Christian mothers, " he cried, " 'tis you I would address. How can you answer to your consciences, to lead your daughters to the altar of fashion instead of the altar of Christ ? " When I see the blooming faces now looking up at me and hanging on my words, among whose possessors some may have received durable im-

pressions of religion, and others wanting but advice and direction for ever to impress it in their bosoms ; when I fancy those creatures intended for heaven, but dragged down to earth, hearing the lips of man efface the truths which once fell from the lips of *Christ* ! I feel language cold ; enthusiasm inadequate to express my sensations. I know no words in which to address the mother, who, content to see her daughter followed, admired, envied in this world, forgets that it is no preparation for another ; forgets that on the bed of suffering and of death her loved child will one day feel the insufficiency, the more than insufficiency, the total uselessness of beauty, dress, distinction, but to emblazon her misery, and in frenzy be tempted to curse the parent who taught her to prize such paltry things." Thus he went on, his hearers hanging breathless on his words, and conceiving

" Truths divine came mended from that tongue."

But as he approached the conclusion of his discourse he drew a brighter picture ! He painted the happiness of that parent " who should present at the bar of Heaven, as objects worthy of immortality, those creatures who had been the subjects of her fondest solicitude on earth ; when in presence of angels, of archangels, of God himself, she would behold them for ever blessing, and for ever blest ; beings in whom mortality was extinct, over whom sin could never more have dominion."

He ceased, and a buzz, rather intimative than expressive of applause, ensued. But what a different scene now succeeded ; what a contrast did the cursing and jostling of footmen, impatient to reach those for whom they came provided with cloaks and shawls, the joking and threats of coachmen and chairmen impeded in their progress to the door, present to those ears which still vibrated to the godlike accents of the preacher, proclaiming joy and salvation to the hearts which responded to the peals of the organ, as it continued to thunder " I am the resurrection and the life."

## CHAPTER XX.

**"Think not the husband gain'd, that all is done,  
The prize of happiness must still be won;  
And oft the careless find it to their cost,  
The lover in the husband may be lost!"**

From an indefinite feeling of envy, which was at all times created by hearing of the elevation or distinction of another, however little it could affect herself, Miss Staples read with no very complacent feelings, among the presentations at the last Drawing-room, "The Marquess and Marchioness of Glenallan, on their marriage;" and was preparing, after a hasty "Dear me!" to run on to the next Marchioness or Countess, had not the whole breakfast-party, of which Mr. Winters formed one, rang in exclamations of "The dear Georgiana!" "The sweet creature!" "Only conceive how beautiful she must have looked!" &c. &c.

"I see," said Miss Staples, who had not joined in the foregoing exclamations, "that there were more of our friends at the Drawing-room than Lord and Lady Glenallan. Here's the Countess of Malverton, and Lady A. Granville, to take leave on their departure for India."

"Ah, poor Alicia!" observed Mrs. Vigers, "it must have been a melancholy presentation for her. But I know she thought it would be but a correct thing to go to Court on that occasion."

"Certainly," said Mr. Winters; "The wife of the Governor-General of India is not a person so unimportant that she ought to leave England unannounced."

"But what did dear Georgiana wear?" inquired Mrs. Vigers. "Do look, Sarah, at the dresses," she continued, addressing Miss Staples.

Miss Staples did, and read aloud what was worn by

the Marchioness of Glenallan, omitting, with a contemptuous smile, the compliment which succeeded it, "of her Ladyship being too distinguished by nature to need the distinctions of dress," and substituting for it a dry remark of her own, "that the thing must have been very expensive."

Mr. Winters secretly smiled, and observed in somewhat of a meaning tone, "That to Lord Glenallan's wife expense would ever be a matter of little moment."

"Yes, certainly," said Miss Staples, biting her lips, "if he has the fortune they say, she may dress like a Princess."

"I am sure she will always look like one," returned Mr. Winters, "whether she is dressed like one or not."

"In her own opinion," hovered on the lips of Miss Staples, but she cleared her throat, and briskly turned over the paper.

When Miss Darcliff, who had taken up another, suddenly exclaimed, "I declare, Charlotte Mandeville is married!"

"Married! to whom?" cried every one.

She read as follows:—"Married, on the 7th ult. John Russell, Esqr. of Bloomsbury Square, to Charlotte Mandeville, third daughter of Sir William Mandeville, Bart. of Hermitage in Surrey."

"Well, to be sure!" said Mrs. Vigers; "so Miss Charlotte is married before her sister. I wonder what Madelina says to that."

"It must have been a very sudden match," observed Mrs. Vigers, "or we should have heard something about it before, constantly receiving letters as we do from town."

"Mr. Russell was taken by storm, not by siege, I suspect," said Mr. Winters, laughing; "and Charlotte's black eyes were the efficient artillery."

"It is rather a falling off, certainly," said Miss Staples, maliciously; "for a young lady who looked out for nobility to take up with plain John Russell. But indeed I think she has done very wisely, and that if Miss Mandeville made a similar match, instead of setting her cap

at Lord this and that, it would be greatly to the purpose."

But while the marriage of Charlotte Mandeville was thus quietly discussed at Abbeville, it was creating surprise, indignation, &c. in the fashionable world. Mr. Russell was cursing himself as a dupe and a fool for having entailed upon himself a misery so great as he considered the possession of a wife; and even Charlotte, though she had obtained the object of her ambition in being married, began to think that, unless her prospects brightened, she had made sacrifices of delicacy and dignity to become so, for which the possession of a mean, ill-tempered husband was a most deplorable compensation. To her mother, however, did Charlotte, in the bitterness of her mortification, determine to attribute every misfortune of which this marriage might be the result; for it was by her advice that, a fortnight after her acquaintance with Mr. Russell, it had taken place, and then only after scenes of altercation and compulsion which would have been intolerable to a feeling and delicate mind—but Charlotte Mandeville's was not that mind. Mr. Russell had been accidentally introduced to the family, and Lady Mandeville, ever on the watch to entrap any man of fortune with a view to one of her daughters, fixed upon him, whom she understood to have amassed a good deal of money in the West Indies, as a desirable mark for her manœuvring. Consequently he was beset with invitations, and, finding it a pleasant house to gain the *entrée* of, generally accepted them, unaware of the price he was to pay for all the civility and attentions which were lavished on him. But in an evil hour, and after a too free indulgence in drinking, to which he was attached, Mr. Russell let fall some expressions in conversation with Charlotte, which she thought proper to construe into a downright declaration of love, and reported as such to her mother. Lady Mandeville, after the lapse of a day or two, during which they saw nothing of the lover, insisted on her son's calling on him to demand a confirmation of the proposals made to his sister, or the satisfaction of a

gentleman. Astonished, but more angry than astonished, for Mr. Russell entertained a slight recollection of having been guilty of some folly in his intoxication which his returning reason condemned, he at first denied, but afterwards confessed some unmeaning expressions having escaped him, which he should not have conceived any young lady would have been ridiculous enough to translate into sense. Mr. Mandeville assumed a high tone, professed himself at a loss to understand his meaning, and only anxious to know which satisfaction he chose to give, his hand or his sword; that his sister was not to be trifled with, and that young ladies accustomed to hear professions devoid of any meaning, were ones to whom she bore no affinity. In short, Mr. Russell, whose timidity of temper caused him to prefer any alternative to fighting, was actually frightened into a connexion to which he had an antipathy; and after negotiations, threats, and bribes, he was allied to heartlessness, coquetry, and extravagance, in the person of Charlotte Mandeville. But this marriage caused such unpleasant talk in London, and produced such a mortifying shyness on the part of those who had hitherto been most intimate with the Mandevilles, and in whose circles they had been the proudest to mix, that under the pretext of the young lady's delicate health, the family found it convenient to remove to a watering-place some time before the season usually appointed for such sojourns; while the bride and bridegroom prepared to to spend their unpromising honeymoon in France.

In the meantime, the splendid marriage, the brilliant presentation, the celebrated beauty of Lady Glenallan, rendered this a triumphant winter for the Countess of Malverton. No party was the attraction at which the Marchioness was not; no amusement the rage which she did not patronize; no fashion the popular till appeared in by her. To Georgiana the poet dedicated his verse—to Lady Glenallan the painter confined his pencil. Her fascinations and beauty were the theme of every tongue, and though they had been similarly great before as after marriage, the *portionless* daughter of



Lord Malverton, and the splendid bride of the Marquess of Glenallan, received very different degrees of adoration. While the world, however, was perpetually discovering new attractions in the Marchioness, her husband was making discoveries of a nature less agreeable : namely, that her temper had at times none of the softness which characterized her beauty ; that the creature whom he idolized as an angel, was in reality but a woman ;—how unamiable a one at times, the following dialogue between her and her lord will serve for a proof.

“ Georgiana, my love,” said the Marquess one morning as he entered the room where she was, and in which the footman had just left a note of invitation from the Duchess of Delmington, “ you’ll send an apology to her Grace, of course.”

“ And why, of course, my Lord,” demanded his lady.

“ Oh ! you are aware,” said the Marquess quickly, as if it were a matter too decided to need investigation —“ you are aware Lady Delmington is not a kind of woman in whose company you ought to be seen. She was the kept mistress long before she was the wife of the Duke of Delmington.”

“ Till you informed me, I was unacquainted with any such circumstance,” replied the Marchioness coldly, “ and dare say half the world are in a similar state of ignorance. Therefore I shall go.”

“ You are not in earnest ?” said her lord, affecting to laugh.

“ Never was more so in my life,” returned the lady.

The Marquess looked a little surprised, but not being easily put out of ‘emper, asked her, smiling, “ If she had forgotten that day two-months,” alluding to its having been their wedding-day.

A vacant stare of the beautiful auburn eyes, and a request to repeat his question, was the only answer.

“ I would ask,” said her Lord, still good-humouredly, “ if you have forgotten that this day two months you swore ‘ to love and to obey.’ ”

“ I am not generally accustomed to be reminded of my duty,” said her Ladyship, sharply.

"Then I hope," returned the Marquess mildly, but somewhat hurt by the asperity of her manner, "you are not in the custom of forgetting it."

The spirit of Georgiana Granville rose very high in Lady Glenallan. "You have at least taken care," said she, bursting into a passionate flood of tears, "that I shall not forget who has the power to enforce it."

"Say not so, my love," cried the Marquess, fondly embracing her; "but believe the first moment of my enforcing it would be the last of my expecting its fulfilment. Go to the Duchess of Delmington's assembly, if it will afford you any pleasure, and believe that mine will ever consist in contributing to yours."

"It will afford me no particular pleasure, certainly," said Lady Glenallan, in somewhat of a softened tone, but still with the petulance of a spoiled child; "and I don't know whether I shall care to go after all; but still you need not have anticipated my answer. If I had decided in the negative, it would then have been sufficient to inform me I had done as well in so doing; if otherwise, far from throwing any obstacle in the way yourself, you should have taken care that no one else did, and considered your wife's dignity incapable of contamination."

Differences such as these soon became very frequent between Lord and Lady Glenallan, but affected his happiness more than hers; for the Marquess, averse to gayety and publicity, was left in solitude for the most part to brood over unkindness and coldness in her manners, which she, surrounded by admirers and flatterers, was at once forgetful of, or remindful only to be indifferent to the effect it produced. Dress, distinction, and splendour, became the idols of the Marchioness; and she enjoyed all the happiness they can produce to the fullest extent. Her clothes, which were of the most beautiful description that England or foreign climes could produce, were imitated, envied, and admired; herself courted, flattered, caressed, as a being of a superior order, and her assemblies and concerts celebrated for their fashion and elegance; while the coroneted carriages and mag-

nificent equipages of Glenallan and Malverton blazed from morning till night in the fashionable streets of London.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"Perhaps I was void of all thought,  
 Perhaps it was plain to foresee,  
 That a nymph so complete would be sought  
 By some swain more engaging than me.  
 Ah, love every hope can inspire,  
 It banishes wisdom the while;  
 And the lip of the nymph we admire  
 Seems for ever adorn'd with a smile."

SHENSTONE.

PREVIOUS to the departure of the Countess of Malverton and Lady Alicia Granville for India, which took place at the latter end of May, they, in company with Lord and Lady Glenallan, went down on a visit to Abbeville, the Countess being anxious to spend some time with her family before leaving England. After the round of dissipations in which they had been engaged for some time past in London, there was a quiet here the most refreshing and delightful; and whether awakened in the morning by the noise of the rookery and warbling of birds, or enjoying in a later part of the day the fragrance of flowery banks and blossoming orchards, all was cheering and lovely. To the Countess in particular, the beauty of every scene was enhanced by the prospect of her speedy separation from it. To Lady Alicia it had almost the charm of novelty, for she had seldom been at Abbeville, and when she was it had been but for short periods. To the Marquess, country was always preferable to town; and even Lady Glenallan was not insensible to the charms of Nature, though she affected indifference to every thing else, and would point out to Lord Glenallan her favourite walks and trees with vivacity and interest. During the Mar-

chioness' stay in Surrey, she occasionally accepted invitations in the neighbourhood, but apparently only to display her own consequence and superiority, for she evidently received no gratification in so doing, and certainly conferred rather honour than pleasure ; for attention was obliged to be kept perpetually on the alert to anticipate her wants and wishes. Sometimes dying, as she declared herself, with cold, she would, muffled up in a shawl, hang over a fire in the midst of the most crowded room, and, regardless of the awkward feelings it created in her hostess, await with evident anxiety till Lord Glenallan should be released from the card-table, or any thing else which occupied him, that they might go away. At others, overcome with the heat of the room, doors and windows were to be thrown open, to the great annoyance of those who were not similarly inconvenienced with warmth. In short, no one, whom every one was studying to please, and prepared on account of her youth, beauty, &c. to behold with partial eyes, could appear more unamiable than Lady Glenallan. But the fact was, she was perfectly spoiled. The admiration of the world, and idolatry of her husband, had completed any thing which her mother had left undone to render her so, and she now considered but her due, attentions and regard which inspired gratitude in others. About a month after the departure of the Countess of Malverton and Lady Alicia Granville for India, during which the Marquess and Marchioness were stopping at Brighton, they went on a visit to Arabin Castle, the residence of the Earl of Arabin, and his sister, Lady Isabella Ireton, in Sussex. With both, Lord Glenallan had first become acquainted abroad, but neither the intimacy existing between them there, nor that which ensued on their return to England, had enlightened the Marquess with regard to their real character : had it done so, Arabin Castle would have been the last place to which he would have taken his wife, foreseeing, as he then might, that it would prove the grave of every sentiment of affection which yet animated her heart towards himself. Lady Isabella had

been left a widow at the early age of nineteen, and from the period of her husband's death, which took place about four years ago, had resided entirely with her brother, sometimes abroad, but for the most part at home; and during the last year both she and the Earl had remained in complete retirement at Arabin—a seclusion occasioned, as report whispered, by levities in her conduct, which had attracted the censure of the world; and by the notoriety into which an affair in Doctors' Commons had brought his Lordship, who was a complete man of gallantry.

But these circumstances were unknown to the Marquess and Marchioness of Glenallan, and to the latter in particular never did time pass more agreeably than that spent at Arabin Castle. In the society of the Earl and his sister she found a contrast to that generally met with in the world: in the elegance of their minds a similarity to her own; in their pursuits a variety which excluded *ennui*. But to the Marquess, who could as little appreciate the superiority of their understandings as mingle in their varied occupations, the visit appeared very dull; and in the first few days of it he would frequently lament to Georgiana that his friend should have become so isolated from society, that Arabin Castle was not half so pleasant as it used to be. But from her he received so little sympathy, that by degrees he confined his regrets to his own bosom; content if he could steal away from a reading-party in the drawing-room, or a botanizing one in the garden, to the solitude of the Park, and the chat of the gamekeeper, which had greater charms for him than Byron's "Corsair," or Darwin's "Zoonomia."

In the meantime, Lady Glenallan was constantly exposed to the company of a man who presented altogether a contrast most unfavourable to the Marquess, and whose fascinations would have been well calculated to ensnare her to destruction, had not Lady Glenallan a preservative in pride, likely ever to protect her from crime. Lord Arabin united to all the manliness of mind and person we admire in one sex, all the gentle-

ness of manner we love in the other : while Lord Glenallan would only acquire distinction where rank had precedence, and fortune command ; Lord Arabin divested of either would appear superior and distinguished. Like her brother, Lady Isabel had native graces, which dignity of rank was as unnecessary to develope, as would be its deprivation to destroy ; and both had, in manners at least, a sincerity which bore no stamp of the world. From the lips of the latter Lady Glenallan soon learnt what the eyes of the former eloquently expressed, namely, that she was the object of the Earl's most unbounded admiration. Such a communication was at first received with assumed doubt and affected indifference, but while it was not received with indignation or contempt, Lady Isabel was encouraged frequently to give her proofs of it. "My brother," said she one evening, as, after leaving the dining-room, she and the Marchioness took a stroll out, "is quite jealous, Lady Glenallan, of your friendship for me, and fancies you more reserved to him than to others ; to him, who, of all others, most appreciates your loveliness and talents."

The Marchioness smiled. "Perhaps," said she, "if Lord Arabin knew me better, he would esteem me less."

"Not so," returned her flattering friend ; "the person happy enough to know Lady Glenallan best, would ever be the one to love and admire her most."

"By that rule," said the Marchioness, with a sigh, "in my husband I should find my most devoted lover and admirer."

"And is he not so ?" asked Isabel, with an insinuating smile.

"He would be so, I believe," returned her Ladyship thoughtfully ; "but,"—and she hesitated.

"Doesn't know how ! is that it ?" said the other, encouraged by the tone of the Marchioness.

Lady Glenallan raised her eyes to those of her companion, and each expressed what neither would exactly have spoken ; but Lady Isabel presently resumed, not

willing to lose such an opportunity of favouring her brother's interest, who relied on her artifices to forward that ruin which he was determined his fascinations should effect.

"There are men," said she, "who have a manner so different from others, a manner which makes their most trifling attentions more acceptable than important services done you by those who do not possess it."

"There are men who possess that happy manner," returned the Marchioness, "and your brother, Lady Isabel, is among the number."

"Why, yes," said the latter, with affected unconcern, "if you knew Edward as well as I do, you would be able to speak from experience that he was."

"As it is," replied Lady Glenallan, "I can do so; years might have multiplied opportunities for its display, but days, and a very few, have amply proved to me its existence."

"Oh that he could hear you say that!" cried Isabel, with animation.

"It would be very unnecessary for Lord Arabin to hear asserted what he cannot doubt—his powers of pleasing."

"Unnecessary, indeed, Lady Glenallan, if they did not comprehend the power of pleasing you; but when they do, how much higher will he prize them—how much happier will he exert them."

"Give him not reason to suppose, I beseech of you," said the Marchioness, "that for me in particular, his manners have attractions; rather believe I spoke of their general fascination."

Lady Isabel smiled a wily, winning smile; "are you afraid," said she, "of the man's being too happy, who can never possess yourself?"

Three weeks had elapsed since Lord and Lady Glenallan's arrival at Arabin Castle, and the former became most anxious to quit it. To him the place was become as hateful as to the Marchioness it was delightful; for from the time of their arrival there, or at least from a very short time after it, did he date that alienation of her

affections, which was every day rendering him more unhappy ; and that it was produced by the little advantage to which he appeared in the company of the Earl and his accomplished sister, he was not so blind to their attractions, or his own inferiorities, as to doubt. Contrasted with the elegant person of Lord Arabin, his own was awkward ; exposed to the sprightly sallies of Lady Isabel, he appeared dull ; and Georgiana seemed determined to convince both that affection at least had no influence in her marrying him, by a coldness the most mortifying, and asperity the most wounding. In this conduct she was imperceptibly encouraged by Lady Isabel, who had never forgiven the Marquess disappointing the sanguine hopes he had at one time, by his admiration, led her to entertain, of becoming Marchioness of Glenallan ; and who determined to make him suffer through his wife, all the disappointment in love, she had in ambition. The Marquess, though far from discerning in general, could not but notice a difference in Lady Isabel's manners towards him from what it had once been ; forgetting that when it was otherwise he had been a widower, and able by an offer on his hand, to reward all the smiles and attentions for which now he could make no adequate recompense ; but feeling, that whatever influenced her conduct, she who evidently disliked himself was no companion for his wife, and would be likely to insinuate into her mind the prejudices which rankled in her own. To separate them, however, was a matter of no small difficulty ; the very mention of departure was discountenanced by the Earl and his sister ; and Lady Glenallan felt far more inclined to listen to their entreaties for her remaining, than to her husband's to depart. Often was the day of going named, but never adhered to ; and the Marquess at last, wearied with delay, took one morning the desperate resolution of announcing to his wife, before they left their apartment, that she must give orders to her woman for the putting up of her dresses, as in two or three hours they should leave Arabin Castle. At first, her Ladyship affected to misunderstand his command, and begged a



repetition of it ; but when it was rendered comprehensive to her understanding, that Lord Glenallan had indeed made arrangements for their departure without consulting her, and was determined, as he declared, on their execution, words were inadequate to vent, looks to express her rage. Regardless of propriety, she gave way to all the ill-will she had for some time past felt for her husband, and upbraided him in language more violent than the Marquess had ever before heard from the lips of any lady, indeed of any woman, and in such as he had little, very little, expected ever to have heard from the *beautiful* ones of Georgiana. Terrified by the fear of her injuring herself, into every concession, the Marquess weakly consented to give up his intention, and endeavoured by a thousand promises of future gratification and indulgence to pacify the storm, which he was as fearful of coming to the ears of others, as Georgiana was regardless : and after a scene which totally undeceived him in any delusion he might hitherto have entertained with regard to her amiability, left her to give orders for the postponement of their journey, thinking by this means to procure peace, though not pleasure. But he was mistaken in believing that with submission his annoyances would end, and surprised when Lady Glenallan entered the breakfast-room (where he was standing with Lord Arabin,) in her pelisse and bonnet. After the usual salutations had taken place between the latter and the Marchioness, her husband, as if to ward off any apparent supposition of alteration in their plans, cheerfully exclaimed—

“ Well ! Georgiana, I’ve been telling the Earl that you and Lady Isabel cannot part at such short notice as I had designed, and he is very angry that I should have thought of it ”

“ You are mistaken, my Lord,” replied Lady Glenallan, haughtily ; “ I shall depart immediately after breakfast. To your kindness, Lord Arabin,” she added, turning to the latter, “ and that of Lady Isabel, I am indebted for all the happiness I have enjoyed while here ; and it has been great, very great ; to Lord Glenallan,”

she continued with a contemptuous glance—"for any alloys it may have had."

Confused and surprised at such an ungenerous and public avowal of her sentiment, the Marquess could only stammer out his incapability of understanding her and the humour she was in that morning. With malicious triumph, the Marchioness expressed a hope that Lord Arabin was not similarly at a loss; and the latter, somewhat annoyed at being involved in such an unpleasant altercation, could only hope he understood Lady Glenallan rightly, when she professed herself as having been happy while at Arabin Castle.

"Happy, too happy," said the Marchioness, suddenly bursting into tears, and throwing herself on the sofa, "not to dread the contrast which will ensue."

Sick of such a scene, the Marquess snatched up his hat and left the room; while Lord Arabin threw himself on the sofa beside Lady Glenallan, and comforting her with the fondness of a lover, not admonishing her with the sincerity of a friend, obtained from her a full confession, of all that had passed between herself and the Marquess. Far different, however, were the sentiments which such a relation inspired, from what she imagined or he expressed. While the Marchioness supposed he was admiring her and her spirit, he was pitying Lord Glenallan; "Poor, deluded man!" thought he; "is this the creature on whom you have lavished your fortune, to whom you have sacrificed yourself?"

But it was not in the utterance of such sentiments he was interrupted by Lady Isabel. No; it was in those of the tenderest sympathy, the most devoted admiration; it was in paying her compliments, the highest man could pay woman.

"Isabel," said the Earl, after she had spoken to the Marchioness, "Lady Glenallan has this morning received her first lesson in matrimonial duties, and she finds it very hard to be learnt."

"You are mistaken, my Lord," observed the Marchioness, raising her splendid eyes to his; "this is not

the first time in which the Marquess has reminded me I am no longer my own mistress."

"I suspect it will be the last," said the Earl, with a meaning smile.

"Does the man exist," feelingly inquired Lady Isabel, as she hung over her friend; "who having caused, could leave another to chase those beautiful tears!"

"He exists in Lord Glenallan!" returned the Marchioness, in a melancholy tone; "he exists in the man who will shortly deprive me of your society. Oh! Isabel, how often shall I think of you, and of the happy days I have spent at Arabin Castle!"

"Tell me, Lady Glenallan," said the Earl, taking her hand; "when you think of Isabel, will you not think of her brother also? Will you not believe him equally ambitious of your regard, though she only has been happy enough to inspire it?"

"Say not so, Lord Arabin," returned the Marchioness, blushing; "both have inspired it; both will occupy my thoughts—I fear to the exclusion of every thing else; but to Lady Isabel I may profess what to you I dare not."

Breakfast was now prepared, to which the Earl went, to summon Lord Glenallan: and about an hour after it, the travelling carriage was at the door, and Lady Isabel hanging about her friend, inconsolable, as it would seem, at their parting.

"Are these professions of friendship to be continued by correspondence?" inquired her brother.

Lady Isabel made no reply.

But the Marchioness, as he handed her to the carriage, observed, "*professions*, Lord Arabin, we are told are of *this world*; and therefore I will not profane our friendship by making any to your sister; but hope my actions will one day prove what at present my heart can only feel."

"Farewell, dear, lovely Lady Glenallan!" said he, "I wish I was leaving you with one better capable of appreciating your value."

These were nearly the last words of Lord Arabin, and those of his sister were something similar. How

different were the exclamations of both when the carriage drove off, and they re-entered the Castle !

"Well !" cried Lady Isabel, "I have earned for myself a winter in London, with the most beautiful the Marchioness of Glenallan. What have your languishing looks and dulcet tones effected, Edward ?"

"Only the making her Ladyship delightfully discontented with the best of husbands ; and willing, I believe, to sacrifice him at any moment for the most faithless of men," returned the Earl.

"For the one, then, whom I have the honour to call my brother," returned Lady Isabel ; "but whom, just at present, I shall call my servant, and request to order our horses, that we may ride away our uncommon grief."

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## CHAPTER XXII.

"Our pleasures are born but to die,  
They are link'd to our hearts but to sever,  
And like stars shooting down a dark sky,  
Seem brightest when falling for ever."

*From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.*

*Hermitage, &c.*

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

To you, hitherto the kind sympathizer in my pleasures, I now turn for consolation in my sorrow. In a sorrow which, if it continue to affect me as it has hitherto done, will quit me soon, and with life. I this day week took leave of De Meurville, of him who has been to me at once a lover and a friend ; whose affection has heightened my enjoyments, while his advice corrected their influence. We left him, as you know, about three months ago in London, which we quitted a short time after Charlotte's marriage, detained there in a diplomatic situation from the Austrian Court, but little thinking we should not see him again till he came to bid us a final farewell. However, so it was to be, and Hermitage, once the scene of all my joy, is now the witness

of all my wo. It was seated under one of its shady trees, I was surprised by the appearance of De Meurville, who pale, and apparently tired and sorrowful, exclaimed, as he approached, "Agnes, I am come to bid you farewell!" Involuntarily I sank on the seat from which I had risen at his appearance, and listened in motionless silence, while he explained to me in a hurried tone, that he had received a communication from the Emperor, which required his immediate return to Germany. For what, or for how long, he appeared either to have forgotten or not heard. In fact, he seemed only to remember he was leaving! and in that idea to have lost every other. Of my grief, at least from what I have expressed, you may form some idea, but of his you never can. Wildly he threw his arms around me, implored me to think of him, to love him, when he was far distant, to believe him true till I beheld him false! to listen not to what was said against him by others, till conviction proved it. "They will tell you," said he, that I am married—that I shall never return to England—that you are credulous, and never man was true; but believe them not, Agnes, believe them not—'tis I who ask it!"

"My De Meurville," said I, "of whom is it that you expect such conduct? Who can you suppose would be interested in giving me information, which you only know would have power to afflict me?"

"Others will suspect it would, be assured," said he, "and report will whisper it—wishes will circulate it—envy will acquaint you with it. You will be surrounded with lovers contending for your affections, friends solicitous for their success, and I shall have no advocate to plead my cause."

"Will you not have an advocate in my heart, Clifford!" interrupted I: "one whose pleadings will prevent my listening to those of any other, in the hope that love and honour may one day be reconciled, and sanction yours."

"Ah, Agnes!" said he, sinking at my feet "that heart will be silenced, indeed, every thing but corrupted. You know not now what you may hereafter become, and

you do not, cannot know, how wretched the prospect of the future makes me."

"What can I do? what can I say," cried I, "to render it otherwise?"

"You can," said he, after a momentary pause, "do that which will dissipate every doubt, say that which will still every anxiety; you can give me this hand! you can pledge me this heart! you can call me, your De Meurville, your husband! The delay of a few hours here will be of no consequence to me, and during these, we may find a few minutes for the performance of a ceremony, which the chaplain attached to your father's household would, I am convinced, go through."

"Oh! De Meurville," said I, "what a part would you induce me to act. Do you imagine I could ever know peace, after deceiving my parents, sullyng your honour, destroying Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe's happiness!"

"Her happiness," repeated he, contemptuously, "that source of remorse, at least, you would not have."

"When I am convinced," said I, "by her marriage with another, that it is independent of you, then you shall be my De Meurville—my husband—but not till then."

He used, as you may imagine, all the eloquence of love to induce me to change my resolution, to silence my conscience, and his own; and if any one's eloquence would have succeeded, it would have been his. Even now, when I recollect it, enforced with such fondness, brightened with such anticipations, urged in such despair, I wonder I could have resisted it. How great must have been its power then, but fortunately there was within me a something greater still, and I did resist it. Instead of himself, I accepted his picture; which he had purposely taken for me, and would not hear of my refusing.

"O that I could think," said he, as he placed it round my neck, "that the time would ever come, in which the husband's fondness would add value to the lover's gift; but I have a presentiment that it never will, that we shall never meet again!"

"Never, De Meurville ! that word comprehends both time and eternity ; and if we meet not here, I trust we shall hereafter."

"Talk not of an hereafter, Agnes," said he, wildly, "to which I shall have no guide ; of a Heaven which I shall never reach, unless from you I learn the way."

"Why will you speak thus?" remonstrated I. "What avails reason if it is thus to be rejected ; and what is woman that she should supplant it?"

"Woman is to man," said he, "a dearer, gentler guide than reason ; one less exacting, less frigid, more influential, more fond." I was overcome by the melancholy expression which accompanied these words ; and the idea that De Meurville might ever err for want of such a guide, almost made me repent having refused to become such, as far as I was capable to him. Fortunately he did not observe my resolution waver, had he done so, all would have been over ; but my face was averted, and his concealed as he leant on me. I told him that I would write to him ; and that idea seemed to comfort him ; that I should consider hearing from him my greatest consolation, and that the letter which announced his return to England and to me, released from his present engagement, would be the most acceptable I could ever receive. But if the fulfilment of the latter was unavoidable, I would endeavour to hear, with satisfaction, that he had sacrificed love to duty, being better able to bear a loss which would preserve his honour, than a love which would involve its disgrace. After having reasoned him not into contentment with his fate, but into submission to it, I entreated him to leave me. He had already bid adieu to the rest, alleging anxiety to return immediately to town ; and if his long stay with me were discovered, it would create suspicion ; besides, every delay was increasing his sorrow, and I wanted solitude to give vent to mine which I had hitherto to a degree repressed. How often did he bid me adieu, and return to repeat it once more ; how often clasp me to his heart, and call me his beloved Agnes. With what emotion did he press my hand when, for the last

time, it lingered in his ; with what agony tear himself finally from my presence. What I felt at his departure I cannot describe to you ; I could not weep, I could not speak ; I stood motionless on the spot on which he had left me, with a feeling nearer approaching to suffocation than any other. My eyes were wearied with looking down the path he went, my head was giddy, and every thing appeared in confusion around me. But soon my stupefaction left me, and, bursting into tears, I wildly followed the walk he had pursued. Fortunately, it was a retired one, and no person met me ; had any one, they would have thought me mad. I called Clifford de Meurville in vain, nothing but echo answered to my voice. I would have given the world to have seen him yet once again—once more to have felt his embrace—once more to have beheld his eyes imploring truth from mine. But why should I recall moments so wretched, so intensely wretched, as those which succeeded his departure, their poignancy is still too bitter not to render the retrospection maddening. Had I possessed power at the time, I could have written you a few lines to implore you, if you could see De Meurville, to console him, to cheer him, to tell him of your own confidence in my affection, and thus to have encouraged him ; but I was incapable of any such effort, and, on reflection, I am sure it would have been unnecessary. If you saw him, your own heart would suggest better than I could dictate ; if you did not, my request would have been unavailing. I must now conclude this long letter, for the dulness of which I shall not apologize, as, if I could be in any thing like spirits now, I should not be worthy of the name of your friend, of the sincerity of your friendship, or of being De Meurville's Agnes.

I am, &c. &c.

P. S. Our house is, as usual, filled with company, at present chiefly gentlemen, among whom gaming is the order of the day, which induces later hours and more noise than is at all agreeable to us females ; in short, it



promises to be a very different summer from the last ; but perhaps no summer will ever again resemble that to me. If it were not from the dread of missing De Meurville's letters, which, directed to a feigned name, are to be left for me at the post-office near here, I think I should accept Mr. and Mrs. Damer's invitation to Songrove, as I fear my wo-begone looks will soon be traced to their real source ; at present they are supposed to proceed from my recent dissipations at Weymouth, and regret for their loss. The Russels are still in France. Charlotte writes me word she hates her husband. What a confession for a bride !

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

" 'Tis past ! the veil is torn away  
That hid the idol from my sight,  
And mocking reason's sober ray,  
Enfolded thee in fairy light."

AFTER leaving Arabin Castle, Lord and Lady Glenallan returned to Brighton, he to endeavour to please his Lady, she to please herself. With change of residence the Marquess hoped for a change in Georgiana's manners towards him, but in this he was disappointed, and a coldness, which the slightest provocation irritated into passion, though the most unbounded tenderness could not soften into love, continued, as when at Lord Arabin's, their general characteristic. Previous to this hated visit, though she had frequently shocked and surprised him by the indulgence of a violent spirit, she had not wounded him by a systematic indifference ; and rendered miserable by such conduct, the Marquess, to discover its source, was betrayed into an action which perhaps no circumstances could justify, and which increased the evil it developed the source of. Preparing

one evening to peruse a book which he brought down from the Marchioness's boudoir, after she, in company with another lady, had gone to a concert, he was surprised by the falling of a letter from it; and on examining the direction, which was to the Marchioness of Glenallan, discovered it to be from Lady Isabel Ireton. Prompted by irresistible curiosity to satisfy himself whether he was right in the suspicions he had long entertained of the counsels of this lady undermining his peace, he opened the epistle, whose length and handwriting would have certified it, without farther evidence, to be the production of a lady. By the commencing sentence, which congratulated her on her safe arrival at Brighton, he discovered the letter to have been written about a month before, in answer to one Lady Glenallan had despatched immediately after her coming to that place. It proceeded thus: "How my brother and I laughed over your description of the journey; how well we could imagine your agreeable Lord poring over an old newspaper in one corner of the carriage, while you fell asleep in the other, dreaming, as you was kind enough to say, of Edward and of me."

"Ungrateful Georgiana!" involuntarily exclaimed the Marquess, as he drew a candle nearer to him, and lost all the scruples he had hitherto felt in reading the letter. "Is this the recompense for all the attentions I showed you during that journey? for my forbearance in not resenting unkindness from you, which any other man would have made you repent of for years afterwards." But he went on.

"You cannot conceive, my dearest Lady Glenallan, for, notwithstanding your desire, I cannot call one, so much my superior in every thing but years, Georgiana; how wretched my brother has been ever since your departure; he literally thinks of nothing but you. Not a book but recalls—may I write it?—your dear image. Not a ride, not a walk do we take, but those which were favourites with you. Not a subject is started, but has a reference to you. In me he knows too well he has a delighted listener, not to be lavish of the theme

when we are together : and could you hear him—could you hear with what rapture he speaks of you—with what penetration he discovers the most trifling thing that has been performed by you, whether it be a song you have copied, a landscape you have sketched, or any thing which you have touched.”

“And what is all this to her ? to my wife ?” exclaimed the Marquess passionately, as, without patience regularly to read, he ran over the remainder—instances of Lord Arabin’s remembrance, admiration, &c. &c., till he came to a passage, in which his own name caught his eye. “I hope,” it began, “that you do not forget my advice, that you do not forget to remind Lord Glenallan a thousand times a day of his happiness in possessing so lovely and beautiful a wife : it is the only way, my charming friend, for men are of all beings most ungrateful, and require perpetually to be reminded of what they enjoy. Let not the natural amiability of your disposition lead you to be over obliged for any thing he does for you ; ’tis for your happiness, and to promote the continuance of his attentions, I advise it ; for once too grateful for his gifts and he will think he has been too generous in lavishing them, however mistaken he would be in such a supposition, for could he give you the wealth of the world, it would be no compensation for the blessings you bestowed on him when you gave him yourself. Oh, Lady Glenallan ! if adverse fate had not thrown him and his thousands in your way at the moment it did—when, as you once described it to me, India was yawning for your reception on one side, every thing that was disagreeable your alternative on the other, you would never have fallen to the lot of one so little capable of appreciating you. No, you would now be the cherished idol of some man very different from Lord Glenallan ! You would be listening to love and adoration from lips more persuasive than his.”

“Cruel, unkind suggestions !” said the Marquess, throwing down the open letter on the table. “It is you, then, my Lady Isabel, I may thank for all Georgiana’s

unkindness. My thousands might indeed have been better bestowed than on one who allows you to speak thus of me—than on one, who, while she is enjoying all the luxuries they can purchase, despises their possessor.” Again he took up the letter, and his miseries were completed, when, on looking at the conclusion, he discerned a few lines from Lord Arabin himself. Previous to which Lady Isabel had written—“My brother is just come in; he is quite angry that I did not acquaint him with my intention of writing to you, but I knew if I had I should not have been able to have written it in peace. He would have been at my elbow with, ‘Tell her this, and remind her of that;’ so I gave him no intimation; however, you will not escape his Lordship; he insists on informing you himself, with regard to the culture of the American plants he gave you the evening before you left, and is impatient to take the pen out of my hand, so adieu, &c., &c.’”

The Earl commenced with, “My dear Lady Glenallan,” and after apologizing for thus addressing her, proceeded to give her a few directions about the rearing of the flowers, which he had learnt that morning from his gardener, and which the latter having been away some time before, prevented him from earlier obtaining; but the far greater part of the space in which he wrote was filled with insinuations, allusions, &c., which the Marquess was at a loss exactly to understand, not having been admitted into that free-masonry of looks and words which had been established by the trio at Arabin Castle. Engaged, however, in puzzling out the meaning of his Lordship, he was startled by the opening of the door, and thunderstruck, when the person who approached, and in a moment stood before him, was—Lady Glenallan!

“I did not expect—you—so—soon,” stammered out the Marquess, in some confusion.

“So it would seem,” observed her ladyship, who, white as the pearls, of which a profusion adorned her dress, fixed her eyes with mortifying composure on the letter he was half-folding, half-rumpling up; “but I became so faint, I could not stay out the concert.”

"You look very pale," said her lord.

"Really," cried Lady Glenallan, sharply, "I am afraid my entrance was very mal-apropos ; I certainly interrupted you in the perusal of some fair correspondent's letter."

"Fair !" repeated the Marquess, and overcome with confusion the letter fell from his hands.

With an expression at once playful and malicious the Marchioness caught it up ; in an agony her lord demanded its restoration.

"Don't be afraid," said she, eluding his efforts to gain it ; "I shan't read it."

"Don't look at it—don't, even at the direction, I implore you," cried the Marquess.

But it was too late, her eyes were fixed upon it, and she exclaimed, "Why this is to me, my Lord ! How came it in your possession ?" And on examining it more closely, and perceiving it was franked by Lord Arabin—"Is it possible, Lord Glenallan," she continued, "is it possible that you have really been reading this letter to me from Lady Isabel Ireton ? Well indeed might you be alarmed at my entrance, when it was thus you were engaged. What confidence can I in future have in one who has descended to such a meanness—a meanness which, if it had been to preserve my life, I could not have been guilty of." Thus the Marchioness continued her indignation, increasing with every word, and at last by its violence, rousing Lord Glenallan's.

"Perhaps, Georgiana," said he, "if you found your dearest interests undermining—if you found yourself losing affections which you had done all in your power to gain, and suspected the cause—you, too, might have been betrayed into the only method of convincing yourself."

"Never !" returned Lady Glenallan, scornfully ; "I should never prize affections of which any investigation could prove the falsity."

"You talk like a high-spirited woman, Georgiana," said the Marquess ; "I feel like a husband disappointed where he has placed his most sanguine hopes ; wounded

by her on whom he had fixed his fondest affections ; despised and ridiculed, where it has been his greatest study to please and to oblige."

" 'Tis idle talking, my lord," furiously interrupted the Marchioness ; "I have convicted you in an action which your footman would have scorned to have been guilty of, which will for ever lessen you in my estimation—which will for ever make me suspicious of you ; and which induces me to wish, heartily to wish, that that letter had disclosed something worse to you than it can have done."

"What could it have disclosed worse," asked the Marquess, with a deep-drawn sigh, "than that I have bestowed my affections on one totally unworthy of them—on one, who after being but six months married—"

The Marchioness interrupted him—"The fact is, Lord Glenallan, you are jealous of the Earl of Arabin. I saw it from the first day we were at the Castle, and so did Lady Isabel, so did the Earl himself, and we laughed at such nonsense."

"You were very obliging," observed the Marquess, bitterly.

"Yes ; we laughed at it," continued her Ladyship ; "not that Lord Arabin was so insignificant a rival, but that you had so little confidence in your wife, so poor an opinion of yourself."

"I have had too much confidence in my wife," said Lord Glenallan. "I have given her credit for being better and wiser than I now fear she is ; I have considered her worthy of love and esteem which she deserved not to inspire."

"Spare your eloquence !" cried Lady Glenallan, "I am not to be taught by you, or by any one my conduct. You do not now address the meek, tame-spirited creature who, from what one hears, would have hid her face from man or woman either to oblige you."

"Georgiana !" vociferated the Marquess, exasperated by so unfeeling an allusion to his late wife ; "you may insult me, but you shall not her, who was as superior to you in amiability, in gentleness, in all that inspires love

and regard, as it is possible for one woman to be to another !”

“You are certainly quite inspired,” returned Lady Glenallan, contemptuously; “and form a most ludicrous contrast to the dumb, terrified person you were but a few minutes ago. I am sure I wish your conscience would have similarly harangued you when you were presuming to open my letter.”

“Cease ! in mercy cease !” cried her unhappy husband.

“I’ll not cease ; I’ll not have mercy,” returned the Marchioness ; “you showed none for my feelings when you committed so ungentlemanly an action, and I have none for yours. What was Lady Isabel’s correspondence with me, to you, that you should pry into it. Fortunately,” continued her Ladyship, “or perhaps unfortunately, for your gratification, she is an angel ! and wrote nothing that angels might not have seen ; but it might have been otherwise.”

“Lady Isabel is a devil incarnate,” said the Marquess ; “one who would wish to betray you, and render me miserable ! In the latter,” added he, in a melancholy tone, “she has nearly succeeded.”

“I’ll not stay,” cried the Marchioness, ringing the bell violently, “to hear my best friend abused ! No ; I’ll leave you, Lord Glenallan ; I’ll go any where, to any place, which is the farthest from you.”

“Go to your angel, Isabel,” said he, sneeringly ; “go to Lord Arabin, and tell him that I now know the value of her friendship and his.”

“I’ll not bear this ! I’ll not bear it !” said the Marchioness, almost screaming with passion, and scarcely able to command herself to give orders for the carriage when the servant entered.

“What would you do ? are you mad ? inquired the Marquess, after the footman had shut the door.

“No ; I’m not mad,” returned Lady Glenallan ; “were I so, I would remain here, I would remain with you, I would expose myself to your cruelty.”

“Cruelty !” repeated her Lord ; “pervert not terms ;

talk not of what you never knew. Oh ! Georgiana," he was continuing, when interrupted by her bursting into a flood of tears, the customary conclusion to her storms of temper, and, unfortunately, the usual dissipators of all Lord Glenallan's anger, for the sight of them made him forget her unkindness, her heartlessness, her ingratitude ; and remember only her youth, her beauty, her dependence on him for love and protection ; and he took her to his arms, he implored her forgiveness for any thing he had said unkind, and but a promise that she would endeavour to behave to him as she had once done.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

" Some few there are, of sordid mould,  
Who barter youth and bloom for gold ;  
Careless with what or whom they mate—  
Their ruling passion all for state."

HERMITAGE did not present this summer, as the last, an assembly of refined society and succession of elegant amusements ; for the marriage of Charlotte had thrown the family under a cloud, from which they had not yet been emancipated, and the style of people who would have formed the one, and contributed to the others, were those who had now become shy of their acquaintance. Women of delicacy dreaded contagion ; men of fortune feared ensnarement ; and the Mandevilles, to escape the mortification of being quite deserted, had to collect about them those to whom they were quite indifferent, and from whom they could derive no consequence, with one exception, in the person of the Earl of Ossulton. This nobleman, to whose parsimony they were indebted for his making their house an hotel, during a stay in Surrey which had been necessitated by business, could not be indifferent to them when he had a hand and coronet to offer ; and Lady Mandeville already anticipated the stigma incurred by Mrs. Russell's



marriage, lost in the splendour of the Countess of Ossulton's. But no such brilliant connexion would have retrieved their fame, had not the Earl, during his stay at Hermitage, which lasted nearly two months, become extremely involved by play; and, averse to liquidating the debts he had contracted as unable decently to leave the house until he had done so, it was indirectly hinted by Sir William, at the suggestion of his wife, that all his embarrassments should be removed by the former, if his Lordship could suggest any adequate compensation for the conference of such a benefit. The latter, grateful for the proposal, made liberal offers of patronage for the sons; but Sir William, instructed by his lady, declined that mode of recompense, and pronounced them as already secure, through different channels, of advancement in their respective pursuits. His Lordship then made other advantageous proffers of his influence, his exertions, and all that he could command in short, but his fortune and himself. A sacrifice of the latter indeed had never occurred to him; and when broad hints from Lady Mandeville—who, in a negotiation she undertook with him, was unrestrained by any of the scruples of delicacy which had deterred the Baronet from pushing too closely towards the desired point—suggested to his mind, for the first time, this method of retribution, he was equally confounded and undetermined: confounded evidently at such an idea having occurred to them when it had never occurred to himself, and undetermined as to the realizing of it. Totally devoid of feeling, and in this instance of respect, no necessity of inspiring or creating affection troubled Lord Ossulton; and in contemplating Madelina and Agnes—which he did with more attention after his conversation with their mother, he was only divided as to which he should select—if he honoured either with his hand. The latter he thought a pretty girl; but of the former, who appeared to him dying in a consumption, he suspected he should have a shorter lease; and therefore, after some deliberation, determined on taking her for better or worse, as the most promising speculation.

With what different feelings were his offers made and received ! made as the only alternative to release him from debts which he had no inclination to pay, and with a resolution to disappoint the woman who anticipated any pleasures from their acceptance ; received, as the delightful prelude to every future gratification and triumph, as the forerunner of an elevation which would enable her to patronize or annihilate by a look, those whom she had hitherto courted. Miss Mandeville now found herself placed, in reality, in the enviable situation she had often experienced in imagination, and able, as she believed, to realize all the charming visions of which that imagination had been so prolific. An immediate order on the first dress-maker in London for the preparation of the most beautiful dresses, and on the first carriage-maker for the turning out of the most elegant curricula, would, she thought, be the trifling though agreeable preliminaries to the whole family going up to town ; when she reckoned on selecting her barouche, sitting for her picture, choosing her diamonds, and becoming, by the hand of a bishop and aid of a special license, Countess of Ossulton.

These were the expectations of Miss Mandeville : but somewhat different were the determinations of her future lord ; he perfectly foresaw, from the vanity and thoughtlessness which characterized the family, the desire they would entertain of indulging in a great expense and display on the occasion, by which he would most likely suffer ; and therefore resolved on announcing a necessity for his returning to Ossulton Park immediately after his marriage, which would frustrate their capability of doing so. Once there, he was aware that his Countess would be as isolated from society and any possible means of dissipation, as if she were transported into the heart of India, or wilds of America ; for it was situated in a remote part of Northumberland, and at the distance of many miles from any residence ; an effectual barrier to intercourse, even if there had not been any other : but there was one still more efficient in the savage temper of the Earl, who was detested by every one, unfortunate enough to have intercourse with him.

Never did vanity receive a greater mortification than Miss Mandeville's, when his Lordship acquainted her with his intentions. When, instead of several weeks, she heard she was only to spend two or three days in London, and that as he had made arrangements for their being married in the country, and proceeding immediately after it to the North, it would be quite unnecessary for any of family to accompany them to town. Madelina felt little inclined to conform to plans made with such unceremonious indifference to her inclinations, and would probably have rebelled against their execution, had not her more politic mother advised her compliance, and held out to her the flattering, though unfounded idea, that she would spend the winter in London, and that Ossulton Park was most probably surrounded with an excellent neighbourhood, among whom she would introduce the latest fashions, and be a person of the highest consequence; in short, Lady Mandeville's eloquence, at last, reconciled her daughter to the present fall of the splendid fabric she had built. But she determined to be the star of the North, till, like the sun, she could rise with glory in the East, where next winter she anticipated being the Lady Glenallan of last, and exciting herself, all the interest, admiration, and envy the latter had so amply created. So that after all her own expectations, and those of others, she was married very quietly at Hermitage and set off immediately after it, in a plain travelling chariot for London. During their stay at the latter, they were obliged to stop at an hotel, the Earl having no town house, and that of the Mandevilles being let during the summer. The Countess was visited by all her acquaintance, and nothing could be pleasanter to her than the few days of her residence in London. Dressed in the most elegant manner, she had only to sit at home for the reception of visitors, or drive abroad for her amusement. Engaged in the latter, a day or two after her arrival in town, she met Mr. Damer; he had ever been an admirer of hers, and she, conscious of it, always felt that desire to look pleasingly before him, which we invariably do in presence of those on whom

we suspect we have made a favourable impression. Every thing confirmed Lady Ossulton's doing it, at the moment she was recognised by Mr. Damer : her dress was becoming—a splendid shawl fell over the morning robe, and drooping chantilly and blossoming wild flowers hung about her bonnet, while her face and figure expressed compassion she felt for a poor woman, whom she had just been relieving.

"Allow," cried Mr. Damer, as he held up his hand to the carriage ; "allow one of the earliest and warmest friends of Miss Mandeville, to congratulate the Countess of Ossulton."

"Is it possible I see you, Charles !" said the latter, with animation ; "how are you, and how is Caroline and her baby ?"

"Oh, quite well, perfectly well, I thank you : but how are you and the Earl, and how did you leave them at Hermitage ?"

"I am quite well," returned she ; "London always agrees with me ; and as for Lord Ossulton, I can scarcely tell you how he is. His Lordship is so ungallant a bridegroom, as to leave me alone from morning till night. But at Hermitage, they were all quite well when I left them, and desired a thousand remembrances to you and Carey."

"Have you been long in town ?" inquired Mr. Damer.

"Oh no ! not more than two or three days," replied the Countess ; "and I am, as you may imagine, quite in a hurry to leave it. We shall set out for Ossulton at the beginning of next week ; it is quite Gothic being in London at this season."

"Gothic or not," replied Mr. Damer, "I'd rather see you here than in Northumberland, whose chill blasts will, I fear, ill agree with so fair a flower."

"Oh ! the flower's not so delicate !" said she, laughing, "but it will bear transplantation very well ; and, perhaps, acquire hardihood from the change."

"I hope so," returned Mr. Damer ; "but tell me, Lady Ossulton, did you hear from the Russells lately ? are they quite well ?"

"I heard from Charlotte a few days since," said she; "who mentions that she and her husband will be returning shortly to England."

"And that she hourly discovers new attractions in him, I suppose?" added Mr. Damer.

"No, she doesn't say that," returned the Countess, with a meaning smile.

And after a little more desultory conversation, and a promise that Mr. Damer should call on the Countess next day, he wished her good morning, and returned home; where, to the great mortification of his wife, he raved of nothing but Lady Ossulton. "She is certainly very pretty," said he, as sitting after dinner, he was fiddling with some fruit,—Mrs. Damer playing with her child; "and never looked better than to-day, she dresses so well—with such elegance and suitability!"

"What did she wear?" inquired Mrs. Damer; endeavouring to appear interested about a subject on which she was quite indifferent, or perhaps worse.

"Oh! I don't know, I'm no adept in ladies' dresses," returned her husband; "but it was something very becoming—lilac—or pink—or what you call French white, I think, her bonnet was made of; and then there was some light flowers, May, or apple-blossoms, or something of other, falling and twining about it: it had a very good effect altogether."

"I dare say!" said Mrs. Damer.

"And then," continued he, "it wasn't so much her dress that struck me, but the amiability of her appearance. There she was performing an act of charity and listening to a tiresome beggar-woman; when in the shop opposite which she was stopping, there was a group of gentlemen, among whom, any other pretty woman would like to have made her *entrée*, and been playing off all manner of airs."

Mrs. Damer secretly smiled at her husband's credulity, in supposing that Lady Ossulton was not perfectly aware of which proceeding would be most likely to ensure admiration; and could scarcely hear him assert, with patience, that he believed her very indifferent to it.

"Madelina," said he, "has a great deal of sense,

and is convinced, as she has often told me, of the inutility of admiration to contribute to happiness."

"She has received enough, certainly," replied Mrs. Damer, "to enable her to determine the point."

"Now I think of it," said Mr. Damer, laughing, "you and she were not very good friends; but I hope," he added, in a more serious tone, "that it will not be the case any longer, for I assure you, you would be rather singular in disliking a person who pleases every one else; and that when you call on her to-morrow, you will prove yourself, by your manner, to have overcome any little feelings of jealousy or envy; which I cannot help thinking were the foundations of your dislike to her."

Mrs. Damer disclaimed it being the case.

"Even if it were," continued her husband, "there were many allowances to be made. You saw her at Hermitage, as an elegant and accomplished girl, receiving attentions and admiration superior to yourself; and which, though indeed," he inserted in a flattering tone, "the case is different now, you had not then similar reasons to expect: for though you were a bride, and in my eyes a beauty, you had not that happy manner, and appearance of amiability, which distinguished her."

"How much," involuntarily exclaimed Mrs. Damer, "has she gained by appearances, and I lost!"

"Why, the fact is, Caroline," said her husband, "appearances must ever be added to realities, or the existence of the latter will be doubted."

"I have reason to know that," returned his wife.

"And I think have improved by the knowledge," said Mr. Damer. "You now unite the one to the other, and I flatter myself, that whatever might once have been the case, my wife and the Countess of Osulton would now be equally objects of admiration."

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# **HIGH LIFE,**

**A NOVEL.**

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“'Tis from **HIGH LIFE** high characters are drawn.”

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**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL. II.**

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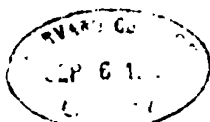
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**1827.**



Porcellian Club

# HIGH LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

"She came, she is gone, we have met,  
To meet perhaps never again ;  
The sun of that moment is set,  
And seems to have risen in vain."

COWPER.

THE vague hope which frequently induces our postponement of any unpleasant duty, namely, that something may interfere to prevent its execution, induced Mrs. Damer to delay her visit to the Countess of Ossulton; which, in compliance with her husband's wishes, she had promised to make on the morning ensuing to that in which her Ladyship had been met by the latter, and, till she actually stopped at the hotel and heard pronounced the unpleasing tidings; "That her Ladyship was at home," she still indulged an idea of the probability of her being out, or ill, or something or other that should prevent her seeing her. But this announced, the steps let down, the footman prepared to usher her through the hall, there was no retention; and with as good a grace as possible, she made up her mind to enter the presence of the formidable Countess of Ossulton. Formidable indeed, only to Mrs. Damer, from the superiority with which imagination invested her; for could she have seen the mind and heart of her Ladyship, divested of the graces which rendered them imposing, she would have owned the one but frivolous, the other weak and wavering; and that it was manner alone, which gave an idea of the extent of her understanding, and the amiability of her feelings, though Mrs. Damer had always supposed the former great, and the latter excited by every one but herself. The Countess, engaged with a book, was half sitting, half reclining on

the sofa when she entered, and her first glance was that of doubtful recognition ; but her next seemed to certify her as to her knowledge of the person who entered, and with a mixture of haughtiness and condescension, but predominancy sufficient of the first, to prove Madelina Mandeville was not extinct in the Countess of Ossulton, she advanced to meet her friend.

"My dear Caroline," she said, "I am delighted to see you ; but really was for an instant at a loss to recognise you, disguised by such feathers and furbelows."

Mrs. Damer smiled ; "I can recognise you," returned she, "notwithstanding a greater change ; allow me to congratulate you on it."

"I thank you," said her Ladyship, with indescribable ease ; "and believe I may return the congratulation, though for a different circumstance—namely, on your ~~accomplishment~~. And indeed," added her Ladyship, with a heartless laugh, "it is a ~~subject on~~ which, if report speaks true, you merit congratulation, for I am told you were become the size of the house."

"I shall be anxious for you to see my child," said Mrs. Damer ; "I think her very pretty."

"Oh, of course !" cried Lady Ossulton ; "you would not be its mother if you did not ; but of my seeing it there's no chance, for we leave town to-morrow."

"So soon !" said Mrs. Damer ; "we had hoped you could dine with us."

"You are very good, very kind," returned the Countess, carelessly : "but talking of your child, is it possible you ventured so far without it ? I had always pictured to myself that when you had a little baby, you would not stir a step unaccompanied by it ; that if you were in the carriage, it and the nurse would be surely perched in one corner ; and that if you walked, they'd be at your elbow. By the bye, what is it called ? some one told me it was named Madelina."

"No !" said Mrs. Damer, "if I had followed Charles's inclinations, it would have been ; but for once I pursued my own, and had it christened Jane, after my dear mother."

"Then I am sure," returned Lady Ossulton, "I am infinitely indebted to you and your mother, for having been the means of saving my name from profanation. I should hate to have a great fat nurse, calling a red-faced squalling infant, 'Miss Maddy.' Excuse me Caroline: but all children are alike, and disgrace a pretty name as much as a pretty frock."

"Then what would be your plan?" inquired Mrs. Damer, "for children, you know, will, if they live, become men and women."

"Oh! my plan," said the Countess, "is to give every child two names, and call it the ugly one all its life, unless it bids fair to do justice to the pretty one; for nothing can be more *outré* or ridiculous, than to see a person with a name to which they do no justice."

Mrs. Damer smiled.

"Tell me," said Lady Ossulton, "were ~~you not~~ surprised when you ~~heard~~ of my marriage?"

"Indeed," commenced the other, in a hesitating tone—

"Indeed, you must have been," interrupted the Countess, "for I was surprised myself at it."

"I was more astonished," said Mrs. Damer, "to read in this morning's paper, of the marriage of Lord Clavers."

"Ah! I saw it also," returned Lady Ossulton; "but why should it surprize you?"

"Because," said Mrs. Damer, "I thought him to have an attraction elsewhere, which he would not so easily overcome."

"I don't understand you," observed the Countess.

"Perhaps I should say," returned Mrs. Damer; "to have had an attraction for the loss of which nothing else could compensate."

"You still talk in enigmas," said her Ladyship; "am I to infer, that it is only to spare my blushes, and that it is to myself you are alluding all this time?"

"Why, yes," returned Mrs. Damer; "at Hermitage, you know, Lord Clavers used to admire you apparently beyond any woman there."



"That was paying me a most special compliment, indeed," said Lady Ossulton, laughing; "when we had never a decent-looking woman stopping there. You would not surely have had him flirt with tall, ugly Miss Backford; or poor, fat, good-humoured Mrs. Keppel, would you?"

"No; but—."

"Ah! you are going to say I might have had a rival in my sister Agnes; but no, not as far as regards Lord Clavers. She is very pretty and innocent, and all that; and to an unsophisticated taste, would have been just the thing; but that was not his Lordship's; and all her blushes and timidity, which another man would have delighted in, he admired less than assurance and repartee."

Mrs. Damer smiled.

"Now, my cousin De Meurville," continued the Countess, "appreciated that sort of thing. He thought with Dr. Gregory, that when a girl comes to blush, she has lost the greatest charm of beauty!"

"Apropos to the Count de Meurville," Mrs. Damer was commencing, when interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Damer.

"I hope, Charles," cried the Countess, shaking hands with him, "you are not come to run away with your wife?"

"Why, Carey," said he, "you have made your visit very late, or very long."

"Not very long, I can answer for it," returned Lady Ossulton; "whether it is very late, I don't know, for I haven't my watch here."

"It's just turned half past four by mine," said Mr. Damer, "and I don't like these autumnal afternoons for her being out,—they are very chilly."

"You are a very thoughtful husband," observed the Countess, smiling.

"What can I be expected to remember," exclaimed he with animation, "if I forget Caroline!"

"I see," said Lady Ossulton, while a shade of melancholy for a moment crossed her features, "that the

idea of the wife being dearer than the bride, is not merely poetical."

"From experience I can pronounce it not," returned Mr. Damer.

"Oh, Charles!" continued her Ladyship, "if Lord Ossulton proves such a husband to me as you have been to her, I shall be the best of wives and of women!"

"From my soul I believe it!" returned he emphatically.

"I am sorry to hear," observed Mrs. Damer, "that Lady Ossulton is to leave town to-morrow."

"Yes; I met her *Care Sposo* just now, and he tells me that it's a settled thing; by the by, he'll be here directly;"—and as he spoke the Earl entered.

"Well, my Lord, what account of your carriage? will it be ready by to-morrow?" inquired Mr. Damer.

"Oh! by to-morrow to be sure," returned ~~his~~ Lordship, gruffly; "but it was all that rascal's fault that ~~it~~ wasn't ready to-day, and we should have got on the first stage ~~this~~ evening."

"~~We~~ are in a great hurry to leave," said Mr. Damer, smiling.

"To be sure I am: what man in his senses would stop a day longer at a London hotel than was necessary? It is ruination, actually ruination!—but introduce me, if you please, to your Lady."

Mrs. Damer, the Earl of Ossulton—and Lord Ossulton, Mrs. Damer, was pronounced in a moment; and then Mr. Damer turned to the Countess, "Well, Madelina," he said, "we must bid you farewell; but I hope it will not be very long before we have the pleasure of seeing you again."

Mrs. Damer trusted the same; and the earl muttered a request, "that if they should be passing through Northumberland, they would stop at Ossulton." His lady seconded it; and after reiterated good wishes, Mr. and Mrs. Damer were taking a final leave, when it suddenly occurred to the former, that if asked, the Ossultons might dine with them that day; and delighted at having started the idea, he instantly proposed their

doing so. At first the usual impediments appropriated to such occasions were suggested on the part of the lady, "of dresses being packed up," "necessity of being early," &c. ; and Mrs. Damer began to entertain hopes of her non-compliance ; but Mr. Damer, most unnecessarily in his wife's opinion, so urged the point, stating it would be "quite in the family way," "no necessity for dressing," "and the Countess able to return at whatever hour she liked ;" that to the unspeakable regret of Mrs. Damer, whose solicitation had been but faint, her Ladyship agreed, and with the Earl, who was very glad to be saved the expense of an hotel dinner, promised to be with them in little more than an hour.

During the drive home Mr. Damer was congratulating himself on having been lucky enough to think of the thing, and suggesting any additions that might be necessary to their previously arranged dinner, for which two or three gentlemen were already invited ; while Mrs. Damer, sickening at the thought of seeing more of Madelina, with whom she had hoped to have shaken hands for the last time in the morning, fell into something like a sullen reverie, confining herself to monosyllables, except when she remarked, which she did two or three times rather petulantly, that she supposed the Ossultons would keep them waiting till seven. Had it depended on Lady Ossulton, perhaps they might, but nothing now did : and when at a quarter before six her Lord desired her to put on her shawl and bonnet, for as it was a fine afternoon, and they were not dressed, it would answer to walk to Brook-street, she made no objection, but wrapping herself in an Indian shawl, and throwing a veil over her Leghorn bonnet, prepared to accompany him.

Mrs. Damer was standing at the window looking out for a carriage, when she saw them cross the street, and instantly that slight agitation came over her, which the appearance of Lady Ossulton always created. She threw a glance around the room, to see if there was nothing likely to attract the keen satire of her Lady-

ship, and then, for the twentieth time, surveyed herself through a mirror, and began to fancy she was too much dressed, in which unpleasant truth she was confirmed by Lady Ossulton, who, merely attired herself in a coloured muslin richly flounced, exclaimed, as soon as she cast her eyes upon her—"Is it really for *me* you are so fine, Caroline, or do you sport this ball suit for Mr. Damer every day at dinner?"

Her Ladyship laughed as she spoke, but it was a laugh of mortifying contempt, and Mrs. Damer was glad to be spared answering by the entrance of her husband, and one of the gentlemen who had been invited. The others followed soon after.

Dinner passed off without any particular incident. Lady Ossulton, languid and affected, ate but little, while Mrs. Damer, fancying herself particularly watched and listened to by her Ladyship, felt a reserve and awkwardness, which was not lessened by the frown it occasioned on her husband's brow, or by the triumphant smile which played round the lips of the Countess, who could understand, though she had never felt such embarrassment. As long as it was possible, Mrs. Damer delayed making the move after dinner, anticipating the unpleasant *l'ête-à-tête* that would ensue, and perhaps might have done so longer, had not a significant glance from her husband reminded her of the incorrectness of such proceedings, and compelled her most unwillingly to bow to Lady Ossulton, who obeyed her signal for retiring with the ease and elegance of a princess.

Together in the drawing-room, and dependent on each other for amusement, it might have been supposed that Lady Ossulton would a little descend from the chilling *hauteur* which had hitherto marked her manners; but if she did, it was to nothing more agreeable, and her vivacity was accompanied by an asperity the most unpleasant, as her silence had been marked by a listlessness the most mortifying. Standing at the fire-place, her Ladyship, after a pause, during which she had been steadfastly regarding her companion, observed—"You should never wear pink, Caroline; it is the most un-

becoming colour possible to you, and at this moment, begging your pardon—we are friends, you know—you look worse than ever I saw you."

"Then I am afraid I must look very bad indeed," returned Mrs. Damer, reddening; "for in your eyes I know I never look well."

"You are mistaken," said the Countess; "and what is worse, angry." She added in a coaxing tone, "When, if you reflect, I should not have noticed your looking bad if it had been an habitual thing, but its not being so makes it remarkable."

"Oh! you are an accomplished flatterer," said Mrs. Damer, and she smiled; "but on me at least, flattery is thrown away."

"Don't imagine," returned the Countess, "I bestow any ~~thing~~ likely to meet with such an ungrateful recompense, and flattery of all ~~things~~ is that I am least lavish of; those who expect it from me are invariably disappointed. But what I was going to observe was, only you interrupted me, that pink is never a colour you should wear; every other would become you ~~more~~, and in your old blue pelisse this morning, you looked infinitely better than in that pink body, though I can easily see it's new, and I believe fashionable."

"Well, let us talk of something more interesting than my looks," said Mrs. Damer, and she would have turned the subject: but not so Lady Ossulton.

"Still the same humble personage as ever," said her Ladyship, "fancying every thing of more consequence than herself, and wishing only to remain in obscurity! Well, Caroline! I admire but I can't understand you."

"At this moment I cannot you either," said Mrs. Damer.

"And yet at this, or any other moment, it is very easy," observed the Countess; "I am a matter-of-fact sort of personage, who say what I think, and think what I say; or rather, I am a woman who, acting from the impulses of her heart, too often forgets to pass them through the ordeal of her *reason*."

Mrs. Damer, recollecting no instance in which Lady

Ossulton's enthusiasm had led astray, did not sympathize with her on its excess, but cutting short the sentimental strain, asked her, "What she thought of the apartments they had taken?"

"Oh, that nothing can be nicer," returned her Ladyship, looking around. "And you have a piano; I see. Is that your own?"

Mrs. Damer replied in the affirmative; and Lady Ossulton crossed the room to open the instrument.

"Do you play much?" her Ladyship inquired, running over the keys.

"No! Charles hates music."

"How unfortunate! and you play so well!" said the Countess, "far better than I do."

"Oh, no!" returned Mrs. Damer, shaking her head.

"But oh, yes!" said the Countess, "you do a great deal; though you fancy me so superior in every thing."

"I know you by this time too well, to have any thing left to fancy respecting you," observed Mrs. Damer, in rather a pointed tone, eluding as she spoke, the arch and penetrating eyes of Lady Ossulton.

"Do you?" returned the latter, "and do you give me credit for nothing more than is apparent? Is that quite fair, Caroline?"

"Is it otherwise?" replied Mrs. Damer: "may not all your attractions and graces be visible at a glance, while those of others are often concealed? Were I to make a simile, I should compare you to a diamond, cut, set, and polished, while many of my acquaintance, equally accomplished, equally beautiful, are diamonds from which you must rub some encumbering dross, and which want refining to strike with equal admiration."

"You are really quite brilliant!" said the Countess, and she laughed: but instantly changing her tone, "Perhaps I am preventing your visiting your nursery," she said, "and don't let me, I beseech you. Bring the child down here, or go up to it, whichever you like; and don't mind me, I can amuse myself."

Glad of the permission, Mrs. Damer left her Lady-

ship for about a quarter of an hour, and at the end of that time, returned in company with little Jane, who was just pretty enough to be beautiful in a parent's eyes.

The gentlemen had entered the drawing-room, and time was, when to appear amiable before them Lady Ossulton would have played and fondled with the child, but that time was not the present, nor probably ever would be again, for the object was attained which alone had induced such amiable graces : and with her shawl wrapped round her, Lady Ossulton was now contemplating, with Mr. Damer, a picture of the beautiful Countess of Coventry, which hung at one end of the room, and which each allowed to resemble extremely the Marchioness of Glenallan.

"In all but expression," said Lady Ossulton, "and that of Lady Glenallan is so peculiar, such a combination of artlessness and yet coquetry, of pride and yet desire to attract, as nothing, I believe, but her own crimson lips and splendid eyes could portray."

"Yes, there's a dissimilarity in the expression, which creates a difference," said Mr. Damer ; "but ~~Lady~~ Glenallan is, in my opinion, divine ! by the bye," he continued, and then hesitated, "where was it I last saw her ?—Oh, I recollect now, at the Opera—at the Opera of Semiramide ; and to be sure, she looked beautiful, beyond any thing I ever saw. It was not dress that added a charm, nor ornament a lustre ; for the former was perfectly plain, and of the latter she had none : no, it was herself alone that shone, and shone so pre-eminently bright as to throw every thing else into the shade. Really, when I looked at her resplendent countenance, hanging with intense interest on the performance, I could not but think it profanation, that Heaven should ever have placed her in such a world as this ; that a creature like Lady Glenallan, should have to mingle with mankind in general !"

During this speech the Countess frequently bit her lips, and at the conclusion of it, remarked, with rather a contemptuous expression, "That she believed the Marchioness of Glenallan had a few human passions, which

served to keep her pretty much on a level with those to whom in other things she might be superior."

"Oh, to be sure she has!" returned Mr. Damer; "with her supernatural beauty and accomplishments, she would not be mortal if she had not."

"Really the Marquess would have reason to be jealous, if he heard you rave so about his wife," said the Countess.

"No, he is too much accustomed to the thing. Where could he meet the man who did not admire Lady Glenallan?"

"Ah! but it is not every one who would express admiration in such warm terms. However, he is happy to have won the woman who wins all mankind; and I hope he'll never think he paid too dear for the distinction."

"Never, while Lady Glenallan looks so lovely!" cried Mr. Damer.

"Never, certainly, if those lovely looks for ever beam on him; but—" and she shook her head.

"Oh they do! depend upon it they do! she must love the man who has made her all she is!"

"She ought," returned the Countess, suspiciously; "but see," her Ladyship continued, moving towards the tea-table, "here's your quiet little wife has been waiting tea for us, most resignedly. What inattentive people we are! Gentlemen, I admire your politeness; Caroline, you really are the most patient creature in the world."

"Upon my life you are," said her husband.

"I should not suspect even the Glenallan to be more so."

"No, I should think not," observed Mr. Damer.

"And indeed, that she and your wife had very few dispositions in common."

"Perhaps you are not recommending me by that speech," said Mrs. Damer, smiling.

"If I am not," returned the Countess, "Charles does not deserve his good fortune in possessing you; but I rather imagine I am, and that he has long learnt to appreciate your value."



"Is this Mocha," inquired Lord Ossulton, after tasting his coffee.

"For the credit of their economy, don't suppose it," said the Countess.

"Indeed it is not," said Mrs. Damer; "but I am glad it's good enough to be mistaken for it."

"It is excellent," observed Lady Ossulton. "You must give me the receipt for making it; for, as I am to become housekeeper, I beg or borrow whatever I can take hold of."

"And you really pretend you are going to become that homely character," said Mr. Damer, gravely.

"Yes, really, and without pretence, am I," returned the Countess, "going to settle down into that uninteresting, unsentimental sort of personage, whose chief merit will consist in being more economical than her neighbours."

"So, should we go to Northumberland," said he, "we shall not hear of the Countess of Ossulton patronizing this ball, canvassing for that member, attending these races, and expected at those assemblies."

"Oh! no, no!" said she, laughing; "but of the Countess of Ossulton, taught by experience the little pleasure these things can afford, and preferring to them the dull routine of domestic life."

"Well, we shall see," said Mr. Damer, and he laughed.

"Well! we shall see," said the Countess, and she laughed also; "but I think you will yet own that it was not in a spirit of romance I made this declaration; and that while many speak from their imagination, Lady Ossulton ever spoke from her heart."

A murmur from the Earl, of its being time to go, soon obliged the Countess to take leave; and she did so with a regret that seemed portentous of her future fate. "Farewell, Caroline! I hope once more to see you! Farewell, Charles, we shall never meet again!" were her last and melancholy words; over which Mr. and Mrs. Damer pondered for a while, but concluded by attributing them to the low spirits which a prospect of a long separation might occasion.

## CHAPTER II.

" You once made a promise, a long time ago,  
'Twas made half in jest—but 'twas not taken so :—  
You'll be call'd to fulfil it, and cannot evade,  
But I think you'll regret that it ever was made."

OMITTING the detail of two or three months in the history of Lord and Lady Glenallan, which time was passed in France, we shall introduce the Marchioness to our readers in the character of a mother ; whose duties she was perhaps better calculated to fulfil than those of a wife, for her child could provoke none of the proud passions by which its father was rendered miserable, and the little Earl of Montalpine conciliated her affections by reflecting all that beauty for which she herself was so celebrated. The place of its birth, which finally proved to be London, had been a matter of endless altercation between the Marquess and his wife. He was anxious that the infant, who might prove heir to all his honours, should be born amidst the scenery from which they were derived, and tried to reconcile Lady Glenallan to it, by assurances that the first medical advice in Scotland should remain at the Castle while she thought it necessary ; that every article she desired should be procured her from London ; that any friends, whose company she wished for, should be on a visit—even Lady Isabella Ireton he would not exclude—if it could induce her to make Glenallan the place of her confinement : but no ! nothing would do, the Marchioness professed herself to detest the Castle, and to entertain a determined resolution of never visiting it again till every thing about it was remodelled, Lady Penelope banished, and herself in such health and spirits as would enable her to enjoy the company with which she should fill the house. But the very idea of going now she declared was sufficient to kill her, to be

laid up in one of those gloomy rooms, on one of those beds, whose hearselike hangings still haunted her imagination, hearing nothing without but the melancholy falling of cascades, and within but the horrible broad Scotch.—Oh ! she should not survive it a week : “ And what would it all be for ? ” her Ladyship petulantly demanded, on one of the numerous occasions on which the subject was under discussion, “ to gratify a foolish whim of yours, and please a parcel of people who don’t care a farthing for either of us, or whether our child was born in Glenallan or Greenland.”

“ You are mistaken, Georgiana,” said the Marquess, “ my knowledge of the Scotch, acquired by a long residence among them, enables me to assert that it would be a matter of pride and importance to them for our child to be born at Glenallan.”

“ Thank Heaven ! ” exclaimed the Marchioness proudly, “ my child will be independent of popularity ! ”

“ Rather thank Heaven, Lady Glenallan,” returned the Marquess, “ when your child has acted in a manner to deserve it.”

“ All I know is,” said the Marchioness, “ that I shall not earn it instead by going to that melancholy nunnery of a place.”

“ I own,” observed his Lordship, “ the extreme aversion you now express to Glenallan surprises me ; when you were there you seemed to enjoy yourself.”

“ I enjoy myself, indeed ! ” returned the Marchioness contemptuously, “ there was great scope for it, truly ! there was great enjoyment to be derived from walking and riding about till I was tired to death, not more from the exercise than from hearing you and Mr. Douglas descant on the beauties of the place ! Enjoy myself, indeed ! ” she again repeated with a sneer.

“ I only wish,” said the Marquess, “ that I had known your sentiments then—that you had condescended to be a little more candid—not to say a little less deceitful.”

“ Yes, and a fine deal of opprobrium I should have got myself by it. There ’d have been your formal

sister up in arms, and every body far and wide haranguing about my pride, discontent, &c. No, thank you, my Lord—I was rather more politic than that; and I determined—yes, I determined to disappoint all the surmises that I knew very well had been formed of me.”

“I wish,” said the Marquessa, “you would always confine yourself to disappointing unfavourable surmises, and justifying the contrary.”

“I should have to make many converts,” returned she; and for a moment one of the heavenly smiles of Georgiana Granville played about the beautiful features of Lady Glenallan.

However, without troubling our readers with the discussions which preceded the event, it will be sufficient to say that Lady Glenallan gave birth to her first child in London, about the latter end of November; and by the time she was recovered enough to see visitors, town became crowded to excess. Among the first of the former, were two more welcome than all the rest—Lord Arabin and Lady Isabella Ireton. The sight of the latter, however, and an intimation from the former that his stay in London would not exceed a few days, reminded the Marchioness of a promise, which though she had all the inclination, she was not quite certain whether she had the power to fulfil; namely, one made to Lady Isabel of having her to stop with her during the winter. The Marchioness knew so well the prejudices which her lord now entertained against both brother and sister, that no spirit less determined than her own, could even have extorted from him a permission for their visiting: how to introduce, or rather how to carry, her intention of the latter’s becoming an inmate of their house, she was somewhat at a loss. But the fertile imagination of woman soon suggested an expedient, which she thought would be effectual; and she determined to make Lord Glenallan’s consent to the visit of her friend, the terms alone on which she would spend the ensuing summer at their castle in Scotland.

This settled, her Ladyship now only sought an interview with the Marquess, intending to communicate to him her resolution, and chance favoured her designs; for, disappointed of the party who were to have accompanied them, they went and returned one night *tête-à-tête* to and from the Opera. Going, Lady Glenallan did not conceive the happy period for bringing forward the subject, the Marquess being a little annoyed by the recent impertinence of a servant; but when returning, his temper was restored to its usual placidity, and she began:—

“Did you observe Lord Arabin and his sister in the house to-night?”

“Yes,” returned the Marquess; “they were near us.”

“Dear! I wish I had seen them. I wonder his Lordship had not come up to speak to me,” said Lady Glenallan. “I hope, however, that you took some notice of them; for really if they had insulted us, instead of showing us every attention when we were at their house, we could not have treated them with more indifference than we have done, since their coming to town.”

The Marquess was silent; and his lady commenced again.

“Really the world would be justified in supposing that the Earl of Arabin had taken some improper liberties with your wife, by the extraordinary manner in which you have cut his acquaintance, after your generally known intimacy before our marriage,”

“I shouldn’t wish that to be supposed either,” said his Lordship.

“Then depend upon it, it will,” returned Lady Glenallan; “and I assure you it is a most unpleasant stigma both on his character and mine.”

“His, from what I have lately learnt,” observed the Marquess, “does not require any additional stigma. It is already sufficiently disgraced by notorious profligacy.”

"What Lord Arabin's private character may be, can be a matter of no moment to me," returned her Ladyship; "I only wish my own not to be implicated in any way, which, let me tell you, if you persist in your present line of conduct towards the Earl, it certainly will be."

"What would you have me do?" inquired his Lordship, whose weakness she had wrought upon.

"Why," said the Marchioness, "I would have you ask Lord Arabin and his sister, immediately to dine with us; account, if you can find any way, for your previous inattention, and insist on Lady Isabel's passing her time with me. Indeed," added her Ladyship, with affected carelessness, and apparently sudden thought, "it must appear most ridiculous my having asked her as I did, when at Arabin Castle, to spend this winter with me, and making no repetition of the request now."

"You asked her!" repeated Lord Glenallan in amazement—"you asked her to spend the winter with you!"

"Yes," said the Marchioness, with perfect *sang froid*, "but I almost doubt whether I shall be able to prevail on her to come, she is now so attached to the country and seclusion."

"There's no fear," returned his Lordship indignantly, "but she'll come if she can, but great fear, Georgiana, that I shall not allow it; and really I am surprised when you are aware that I am acquainted with the sentiments she entertains for me, and of the manner in which she has spoken of me, that you have so little delicacy as to propose her residing in a house of which I am the master."

"It would be surprising," observed Lady Glenallan coldly, "if I were not also the mistress, but while I am, I shall ask whom I please; and I assure you," she continued raising her voice to a sharper key, "it is much more surprising that I have patience to hear you talk so, to hear you revert, for the hundredth time, to that letter, which I am sure I wish to goodness had never been written."

"I wish it also," said the Marquess, endeavouring by the calmness of his manner to restrain the violence of hers, "and then I should have known nothing of Lady Isabella Ireton that would have excluded her being a guest at my house, but as it is—"

"Make no rash declarations, my Lord," interrupted her Ladyship, "for know what will be the consequence! say but that Lady Isabel Ireton shall not go to your house, and I declare, that to Glenallan Castle at least I will never go, and that that infant whom I am now suckling, at your request, shall be consigned to the bosom of the first stranger who will give it nourishment."

"What!" said the Marquess, "would you make your innocent boy suffer? Do you prefer the company of Lady Isabel Ireton to the life of your child?"

"That does not follow," returned Lady Glenallan, as they stopped at their own house, "but what I have told you shall follow your refusal of my request; so you know what you have to expect;" and without waiting for an answer, her Ladyship got out of the carriage.

### CHAPTER III.

"See, while I write my words are wet with tears;  
The less my sense, the more my love appears!  
Sure, 'twas not much to bid one kind adieu;  
At least to feign was never hard to you."

POPE.

A SHORT time before leaving the country, which the Mandevilles generally did immediately after Christmas, Agnes wrote the following letter to Catharine Morton:—

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

What am I to think of De Meurville? I have, after a long interval, received another of these cold, extraordinary letters, so unlike any of those he addressed

to me during the first few months of our separation ; so unlike what I, who, whether I scolded him for his silence, or implored him to explain its cause, never resorted to any thing but the language of love, had a right to expect. With a caution which till latterly he never used, he does not now even write my name at full length, but after the A puts a dash, as if he feared that I should one day produce his letters in evidence against him ; or as if, had I any such intention, I had not by me, kinder, dearer, more convicting ones ! Oh, Catharine, had you seen him, who can now write to me thus coldly—when last we were together—when ever we were together—with what fondness he would hang about me, with what inestimable love he would plead for my smiles, had they been withdrawn from him—with what gentleness he would listen to remonstrances or advice from my lips, that he would not have borne from others. Had you even read his first letters to me, in which, though he tells me, and truly, that he says nothing which he would not venture to do were he by my side, you would own friendship a chimera, if his for me were false,—feeling but a name, if De Meurville had none ! And yet this is he who now writes to me as he would to a casual acquaintance—tells me of the news of the day, and expresses common-place anxiety about my health, though he makes no inquiries after that of my family, or indeed any allusions to them in any way ; and in answer to my prayers and entreaties to learn in what manner I had lost his affections, or whether he had withdrawn them to her, who had certainly a better right to their possession, he makes no answer, but that he never possessed that ardency of disposition which would alone enable him to meet my expectations, or adequately return the regard with which I honour him. Then with what I should call cruelty in any one else, but must still by a gentler name in him, he starts doubts of the compatibility of our tempers—confesses his own to be often violent, always reserved, and suspects mine—amiable, of course, he thinks it necessary to insert, as it is, to possess too much



warmth to harmonize with his. On this I shall make no comment, but that he once thought very differently both of his temper and mine. Of fortune he next speaks, and in the most unaccountable manner, and for the first time, regrets that he has not more to offer me than he shall whenever we are married. Knows, whatever my romantic generosity may lead me to say, that possessing so large a one myself, I have a right to expect a similar one in the man whom I make my choice; and crowns all, by adjuring me not to let remembrance of him, or of any thing that may have passed between us, prevent my acceptance of an offer which may promise greater happiness. That, to those brought up as I had been, indulging the expectations I had a right to entertain—rank and honours superior to his could not but be looked for, and could not, whatever those infatuated by love—which he was not, nor from the nature of his disposition ever could be—might pretend, but be necessary. Oh, Catharine! this is he

“Who so often smiling told me,  
Wealth and power were trifling things,  
While love smiling to behold me  
Mock’d cold Time’s destructive wings.”

But why does he talk of my expectations of rank and fortune being justified by my possessing and imparting them; for is not this what he says, or means, when he knows that of the latter in marrying him I should have none to offer; and that to the former his claims are greater than my own. Altogether, this letter, like all his latter ones, is a complete enigma; and what he means by it, I know not: I only know that he is breaking my heart; though I have so scrupulously avoided every thing likely to wound his, and even now, unkind as he is, I will not reproach him—I will implore him but to be candid with me; and if he has transferred his affections to the happy woman to whom he is betrothed, I will congratulate him on it, and witness with satisfaction what I cannot partake. But if he be otherwise,

—if that heart, like a seducing ignis fatuus, is but leading some other astray, then De Meurville—

“Fly me far as pole from pole,  
Rise Alps between us, and whole oceans roll ;  
Oh, come not, write not, think not once of me,  
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.”

I was interrupted in the part of my letter, where I left off at the entrance of Colonel Blomberg, who, as I believe I told you before, persecuted me with his company, and whose freedom of manner is most displeasing to me.

“In tears, Miss Mandeville?” he said, as I approached to meet him.

“They are,” I replied, attempting to smile, “become very frequent guests ; I feel so much the loss of my sister—of my sisters, indeed ; but Madelin’s absence has been more recent than that of Charlotte.”

“Don’t tell me,” said he, with a meaning, and, in my opinion, impertinent smile, “that the loss of a sister whom you are only deprived of by an excellent marriage, could have the effect of chasing the roses from these beautiful cheeks, of drenching these starry eyes in tears !”

“Perhaps, Colonel Blomberg,” said I, “you know better than I do myself the cause of my grief.”

“I know it better,” returned he, “than you would persuade yourself I do ; and it is the absence of one, dearer than the dearest sister which you mourn !”

Confounded by his words, I did not immediately reply, and was prevented when going to do so, by his inquiring, “If I had heard from the Count de Meurville lately ?”

Like a guilty thing, I started at the name ; and with embarrassment and hesitation began “I—I heard from him,” and then correcting myself, “my brother, I mean, heard from him.”

“And he is quite well, I hope,” interrupted the Colonel.

"Yes—or rather no," unintelligibly answered I; "he tells us that his health is very indifferent."

With unpleasant scrutiny my companion fixed his eyes for a moment on my face and then starting up, exclaimed, "Happy! happy De Meurville!" If worlds had depended on it, I could not at the immediate moment have inquired the cause of his happiness; but determining to redeem myself from the suspicions which my manner must have created, and favoured by Colonel Blomberg's standing with his back to me at a window, asked whether he envied the Count de Meurville for being deprived of that greatest blessing—health.

"I envy him, Miss Mandeville," returned he, "for possessing that blessing which would render immaterial the loss of every other."

With apparent indifference, but dreading his answer, I demanded, "What that precious possession was?"

"Your heart," was the reply:

And I thought I should have sunk to the ground, but it was no moment for betraying all I felt, and sustained by my indignation, I said, "Colonel Blomberg, ~~you~~ surprise and offend me by such an assertion; one which you have no authority or foundation for making."

"Excuse me," said he, "the eyes of a lover discern what might have escaped those of an indifferent observer. They discovered the cause, of what my heart had long felt the result. I found myself rejected without the assignment of any reason; I heard of others being so too. I saw you beautiful! attractive! but apparently preserved by the possession or influence of something superior from being misled by flattery, or deluded by love! I looked around for this magical but never-failing power, and then I also saw—the Count de Meurville! young, fascinating, accomplished; your general attendant in public, your constant companion in private; and my suspicions were roused, but they were not confirmed till I watched closely his conduct, and yours; and then, when I saw him animated in your presence, unhappy, or at least thoughtful, in your absence; interested, though it was guardedly manifested,

in all you did and said, and indulging, though cautiously, in the stolen looks of love; when I witnessed all this in De Meurville, and in you, numberless, though feminine instances of anxiety about him; constant deference to his opinion, and delight in his applause! Then, then, Miss Mandeville, I understood what had rendered you each so indifferent to the admiration of the world;—you were the world to each other.”

My silence during this long speech must lead you to think I had fallen into a fit; but dissolved in tears, half angry, half humbled, though more wretched than either, I listened, with my face averted, to what he was saying: all my ideas were in confusion, Colonel Blomberg was talking of what De Meurville and I had once been to each other; I only recollected what we were now, and sad conviction of the contrast gave me neither spirit to refute or to defend, no, not even power to withdraw from the presence of him who was harrowing up all my feelings; like one under the influence of some magical charm, I remained silent, motionless, and he continued.

“The discovery of your mutual attachment did not surprise me; you possess every attraction calculated to ensnare the heart of man; De Meurville every fascination likely to entwine round that of woman: But I own it did—it does surprise me, that you allow others to be ignorant of it, thus exciting affections which you cannot return, justifying hopes which you never can realize! Would it not have been more candid, more kind, when, in fatuated by your loveliness. I threw myself and all I possessed at your feet, deeming every good unimportant, unless through them I could enjoy

‘That dearest bliss, the power of blessing thee,’

to have said my affections are placed irrevocably upon another?”

“Oh, Sir!” interrupted I, thinking it time to rouse myself, when I was suspected of being a heartless coquette, “could you expect me to own this to you, when

I scarce venture to do it to my own heart—when I never did it to De Meurville—when I dare not to my parents ?”

“Dare not !” interrupted he in evident surprise, and somewhat softened accents ; “is it so ?”

“It is,” said I, humbled by the confession ; “for now it is useless to conceal it, but I would adjure you——”

“Fear not, Miss Mandeville,” interrupted he, “I shall not divulge it. Whatever circumstances at present intervene between your and De Meurville’s happiness, I hope, I sincerely hope, they will be removed. But tell me—tell me,” added he, as I was rising to leave the room, “if fate so ordain it that you can never, never be the wife of De Meurville, will you—can you——”

“I shall never be the wife of another,” anticipated I ; “and now, now Colonel Blomberg, you must spare me any farther communication—I am unequal to it—but I rely on your honour.”

“It will not disappoint you,” said he, in violent agitation ; and snatching up his hat, he, apparently afraid to trust his voice to say another word, left the room, while I, overcome by a thousand contending emotions, left it immediately after for my own. Love for De Meurville still predominates over every other sentiment ; he must, I think, be deceived in some way respecting me, or he could never write to me so seldom and so coldly, or he cannot have received my letters, yet he makes no allusion to not having done so. But, in short, I am determined to believe him every thing but ungrateful, and so I will tell him ; and if he suspect any rival, let him banish his suspicions, for their indulgence will, I foretell from the nature of my own feelings, create one too formidable for either he or me to overcome—one, to whose icy arms I shall be consigned, when the repentant ones of De Meurville would seek to receive me in vain.

I am, my dearest Catharine, &c.

AGNES MANDEVILLE.

## CHAPTER IV.

“What a motley generation,  
Sprung from fancy's teeming brain ;  
Shifting age and sex and station,  
Swarm within this magic plain !”

POSSESSING a weakness of character, which for ever warred against the dignity man ought to sustain, Lord Glenallan, notwithstanding the indignation and surprise he had expressed when the Marchioness announced having asked Lady Isabel Ireton on a visit to her, was yet induced to give his consent to it ; and the latter had not been more than a few days an inmate of his house, during which she certainly exerted all her capabilities of pleasing, when the Marquess, forgetful of the injuries she had done him, or perhaps no longer considering them so great, from loving Lady Glenallan less, began to prefer her company as much as he had once disliked it : she flattered his vanity so artfully as to lead him to believe she liked himself ; she fondled his child so incessantly as to convince that she idolized Montalpine ; and more than all, she broke unpleasant *tête-à-têtes* between him and the Marchioness, which heretofore had been of frequent occurrence.

To her Ladyship she was acceptable on different grounds, as the sister of Lord Arabin, as one with whom she could unrestrainedly abuse her husband, and as one who could assist her in spending his fortune : for Lady Isabel, parsimonious to meanness in the disposal of her own income, could advise, most liberally, the laying out of another's, and profit unsparingly by any *carte-blanche* which should be given for appropriation to herself.

But an event was now discussing for execution between her Ladyship and the Marchioness, which, if it were to succeed to the expectations of both, would unite

all that was new to all that was elegant, all that was beautiful to all that was grand. Nothing less than a fancy-ball, which Lady Glenallan determined on giving in celebration of the birth of her son, and which, as commemorating so important an event, she was of course anxious should eclipse every thing of the kind given before. The happy disposition and size of her rooms favoured any designs her Ladyship might choose to put in practice, and money of course could command every requisite for their execution. Consultations were held with the first people in the line of arranging such things; and it was finally settled that the suite of apartments, in which at present Turkey carpets, Grecian couches, splendid lustres, &c. reigned unmolested, should be transformed into a snowy world; where icicles and stars, and glassy lakes and streaming lights, representing the aurora borealis, should glitter in bright contrast to snowy mountains, sombre firs, and scarlet-berried shrubs.

In short, it was to be a Siberian scene; and to complete the resemblance, here and there a hut, such as the exiled Elizabeth might have lived in when she first learned the filial love that led to the emancipation of her father; and sparry caves, which might be the rendezvous of robbers or wild beasts, were to be romantically disposed; while, through the savage scene, music wild and sweet was yet to wander. Nothing appropriate was to be omitted; and when the night arrived for which all this was created, when, glittering with light which had the appearance, though not the reality, of proceeding from the thousand stars which studded the azure ceiling, heaven itself seemed to have lent splendour to a scene already emblazoned with all the magnificence of earth. Nothing could be more gorgeous than the effect, and even the Marchioness owned it beautiful.

"If all this is beautiful," said Lord Arabin, as she and he were strolling through the rooms previous to the arrival of the company, "what is Lady Glenallan?"

"Oh! only a foil to it, to be sure, my Lord," returned she, "though I am personifying its Empress."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the Earl; "but so incompara-

ly lovely as to appear the inmate of a brighter, better world than this."

"That compliment," said her Ladyship, "would have been more *apropos*, if ever it could be *apropos* to me, this time last year."

"Why?" inquired Lord Arabin; "you could not have been lovelier then than now."

"I was an angel then," said Lady Glenallan, laughing, and glancing at the Marquess, who, with another gentleman, and Lady Isabel Ireton, was at the other end of the room.

"So you are now!" returned the Earl, contriving to engage her hand as he spoke.

"I did not make my remark to elicit yours," observed the Marchioness, "but in allusion to an old story,—I dare say you've heard it—my going to a fancy ball in the character of an Angel."

"Never," said Lord Arabin, "I've been out of the way of hearing every thing."

"What! never heard," cried the Marchioness, "that it was in that character I first captivated Lord Glenallan's heart?"

"In what other could you," said the Earl, "when it is the only one you possess?"

The Marchioness was about to reply, but thundering knocks at the door announced the arrival of company; and promising to tell his Lordship all about it some other time, she prepared to meet her guests.

"Should this silver veil be up or down?" inquired Lady Isabel, who personified a Spanish Girl.

"Oh up, by all manner of means!" said the Marchioness, "as you have no Duenna near."

And now a large party entered, some in, others out of character, which was almost immediately followed by another. Among the fantastic groups that presently filled the room, the Mandevilles appeared conspicuous; Lady Mandeville splendidly dressed, but out of character: her two daughters, Arabella and Agnes, as Flower-girls; their brothers as Scotch Highlanders; Mrs. Balfour as a Starry Night. Her Ladyship listened



and answered with delight to the numerous inquiries which were made after the Countess of Ossulton, and announced that Mr. and Mrs. Russel, with Mr. and Mrs. Damer, would arrive directly, which they did: the two ladies attired as Diana and Hebe; the gentlemen out of character. Mr. Russel indeed must have metamorphosed if he could appear anything but an ill-looking ruffian. Later than the rest, for they rather came under the denomination of fine people, Lord and Lady Clavers mingled among the grotesque group: she glittering with spangles, in character of a Circassian Princess, hung on the arm of her elegant husband, who was in a Turkish costume.

The sight of the latter, once the intimate friend, was not necessary to remind Agnes of De Meurville. In the midst of the gay scene which surrounded her,—where royalty moved distinguished,—where beauty shone triumphant,—where heroes blazed with orders, all her thoughts were fixed on him who was now perhaps bestowing on another that love and attention he had once delighted to dedicate to her, and ~~while~~, wherever it was paid, she knew from experience would be too fascinating not to inspire a return. Thoughts such as these were ill calculated to communicate any thing but sadness to her countenance; and so inappropriate did its languid, thoughtful expression appear to the light, common-place character she was personifying, that more than one remarked she would better have played the part of a Nun.

“A Nun of the Order of Despair,” observed a gentleman, in reply to another who had made the preceding observation.

“Yes,” returned his friend; “but is it possible,” he continued, “that this can be that beautiful girl who came out last winter, and to whom I nearly lost my heart?”

“The very same, depend upon it,” said Mr. Dynevor, for that was the name of the gentleman.

“Why, if she had been married since,” rejoined his friend, “it could scarcely have created such a change.”

"For the worse, does your Lordship mean?" said Mr. Dynevor.

"Oh, for the worse, to be sure; what woman was ever improved in her looks by marriage, or rather did not lose in them?"

"I don't know that altogether, my Lord," returned his companion, "look at Lady Glenallan, look at Lady Clavers,—look at the Duchess of Tremfoyle—all these brides of the other day: have they lost any thing of beauty?"

"Two of those you have named had nothing to lose," returned his Lordship, "and Lady Glenallan, you know," he continued, looking at the Marchioness, who was hanging on the arm of the Prince of C—b—g, "is a phoenix, to whom general rules cannot extend."

"She is generally reckoned so, I know," replied his friend.

"And not by you?" inquired his Lordship.

"No; I cannot say I never saw the woman who would bear comparison with Lady Glenallan."

"Then you cannot say as much as I can," observed his Lordship; "but, perhaps you allude to the Venus de Medicis, and with that, if report speaks true, even a Glenallan could not stand the test."

"No, I confine myself to living prototypes," returned Mr. Dynevor; "and I have seen women more to my taste than the Marchioness:—I prefer blonde, to auburn beauties."

"Lady Glenallan," said his Lordship, "unites the perfections of both; for while her eyes and hair are to a certain degree dark, her complexion is delicate as milk and roses."

"They certainly are—it certainly is," returned Mr. Dynevor; "but," and he hesitated; "I believe it is the expression," he presently continued, "I cannot separate from the beauty; and I own there is in Lady Glenallan's, a heartlessness and pride, to me the most revolting. She seems to wonder at your presuming to live in the same world with her."

"Well, I have not patience," said his Lordship, "to

hear you thus decry the loveliest work in the creation ; and I cannot wish you worse than that you may never have a wife resembling her."

"Lord Glenallan would be the best judge of the malevolence of that wish," returned his friend ; "and if I do not very much mistake, he would not consider it the worst that could be denounced."

"But who is that Diana that passed us just now ?" interrupted his companion ; "she with the black eyes, I mean ?"

"Oh, that ? Mrs.— I forget—a Mandeville that was."

"Ossulton ?" said his Lordship.

"Oh, no !" not Lady Ossulton, but— Russell—— Russell—ah, that's the name I mean. She who married her husband when he was drunk."

"Horrible ! shocking !" said his Lordship. "Can she," he added, as they passed Agnes, "be the sister of my pensive Flora ?"

"Of your pensive Flora, my Lord," returned his companion, "and of that lady in the blue pettingat covered with stars ; and of that ordinary Flower girl,"—looking at Arabella.

"Make her out sister to every one in the room, for what I care," said his Lordship, "but not," he added, as under the pretext of buying flowers they approached Agnes, "to my lovely Flora."

"How do you sell your flowers, my pretty girl," asked Mr. Dynevor.

"Cheap, very cheap, Sir," replied she, putting her taper fingers into the basket, as if to select some for his purchase.

"Customers like to choose for themselves," said he.

"Not, I think," observed his Lordship, "when they have such hands to choose for them ! I, at least, should rather be chosen for."

"Are you not afraid of being cheated ?" asked his companion, who personified a miser.

"In dealings with so fair a seller, there is probability of my losing something more important than money," observed his Lordship.

"What can be more important?" said his friend.

"What can never be recovered," returned his Lordship; "money may."

"You are mistaken," observed the Miser, "I never knew an instance of it yet, except once, indeed, in my own case, when, having been unhappy enough to drop a penny in the street—which improvidently, and contrary to my usual custom, I had put into my pocket in the morning—I after a day's searching, found it at last, dirty and disfigured indeed, but still a penny."

"What's this talk about a penny?" asked a snowy-bearded Jew; "I discourse of nothing but gold."

"Were I rich as thee, Solomon, I would not either," said the Miser.

"What avails lucre?" asked a placid Quaker.

"So much," said a shrivelled Gipsy, shaking her head, "that without it I could not tell thee thy fate; but let but a silver piece cross my hand, and I will tell all that may happen to thee."

"I want not to know," said the Quaker, and moved on.

"Past one o'clock, and a fine frosty morning!" cried a stout watchman, as he passed.

"London Evening Star! London Evening Post!" cried two voices in quick opposition to one another, about the room.

"Hope I don't intrude! Hope I don't intrude! Just dropped in. Who's that? What's that? Where are you going? What are you doing?" chattered Paul Pry, thrusting his umbrella into every one's face.

"Cherry ripe, cherry ripe!" warbled a couple of voices, angelic voices!

"Fine fresh eggs! fine ripe oranges! nice neat baskets!" resounded from less harmonious ones.

"Who are those Swiss Shepherdesses?" whispered Agnes to Mr. Damer, with whom she was.

"The Misses Torrens, I think. Will you speak?"

She did, and they were polite and formal as usual. While conversing, a Lochinvar, in the person of Mr. Douglas, came up.

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"Well, Miss Mandeville," said he, shaking hands with Agnes, for they had become intimate during the course of two or three visits to Surrey, made since the time he had first gone there, "I have lost a bet by this being you, for I swore it was not, and even now I am doubtful."

"You may yet gain it," said she, "if doing so depends on my not being Miss Mandeville."

"Am I to infer," asked he, "that this Lady by your side has that precedence?"

Agnes smiled,—*"Arabella has been promoted since you last saw us,"* she said.

"In more ways than one," thought Mr. Douglas; "but," he inquired, turning again to Agnes, "what have you been doing with yourself since I saw you? have you been dancing, or walking, or singing yourself to death?"

"Or," interrupted Agnes, "by what effectual means have I metamorphosed myself, you would ask?"

"Faith! I should," said he; "you are grown so thin, so pale, and I almost fancy so sad. What can it be? Has Corydon proved unkind?"

Agnes smiled, and was glad to be spared answering, by the coming up of a Beggar-woman, who pleaded most vociferously for herself and children.

"Go to the Monk yonder," said Mr. Douglas. "Ask what he can spare you out of the funds of his convent."

"Go to the Devil," cried he, to whom the appeal was then made.

"You should have sent her to a Sister of the Order of Charity," said Miss Torrens.

"Do you think she would have found more mercy from your sex than ours?" asked Douglas.

"To be sure she would," said the lady. "But who is that beautiful Spanish girl? I have been longing to know all the evening," added she, as hanging on the arm of Mr. Granville, Lady Isabella Ireton passed them.

"That," returned Douglas, "is the sister of the Earl of Arabin, Lady Isabel Ireton; but you must not call

her beautiful : for I assure you she has no pretensions to being so. Even Lady Glenallan, her best friend, does not consider her so. She is interesting, elegant, fascinating—every thing else.”

“What is beauty,” asked Cecilia Torrens, “if it is not comprehended in that combination?”

“What is beauty !” repeated her sister. “Can you ask that when Lady Glenallan is near?”

“Or while she herself can show,” said Mr. Douglas, looking at Cecilia.

“What do you think of Lady Clavers?” inquired Agnes, addressing Mr. Douglas.

“Oh ! she’s not long for this world, to judge from her appearance,” said he ; “and all her beauty is melancholy. Eyes so bright, colour so beautiful, a form so gossamer, are but sad tokens of decline !—she is going to Italy immediately with her husband.”

“I fancy the dancing will soon be commencing,” said Arabella ; “as the music, which had hitherto been confined to the warbling of flutes and flageolets, now proceeded from a full band.”

“We shall dance on snow,” observed Agnes, looking at the whitened ground, which had all the appearance of it.

“Will you dance with me ?” said Mr. Douglas ; “Will you play Ellen to my Lochinvar ?”

“If you prefer no better representative,” replied she.

“I could not have a better,” said Douglas, and presently led her to a quadrille which was forming ; and where the Arcadian Nymph, the British Tar, the Scotch Peasant, the Spanish Don, the Crier of Eggs, and Spouter of Plays, &c. &c., were promiscuously paired together.

Another, and another quadrille were soon made up, which, with the occasional interlude of waltzes and Spanish dances, continued till supper. After the latter, Lady Isabella Ireton, to the admiration of some, envy of others, and slight surprise of all, performed by herself a beautiful figure dance, in which the splendid silver veil that hung about her was brought into frequent and

graceful requisition ; now half-shading her face, as if in coy concealment of its charms, now thrown back, as in proud security of conquest, and now folded over her bosom, as, like a penitent Magdalen, she sank in graceful reverences to the ground ; but, finally, trembling, falling, and leaving displayed a figure whose happy proportions, whose graceful symmetry, a dress of white lace adorned, and pearls appropriately placed defined ; — a figure so lovely as to draw on Lord Arabin many an envying eye, when, at the conclusion of the dance, he threw his arm around it, and, amidst loud manifestations of applause, conducted his sister to a seat.

Encouraged by the example of Lady Isabel, several young ladies, in duos and trios, performed figure dances ; and it was not till the morning sun announced the return of day, that any of the party thought of retiring, which they then did, with a universal sentiment of satisfaction towards their noble entertainer ; who, remembering that it was the birth of her child she was celebrating, that Royalty presided, and that a splendid account of the whole would appear in the *Morning Post*, had throughout the evening paid such impartial attentions to her guests, and indulged in manners so flattering and amiable, as to win many a heart she had previously alienated.

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## CHAPTER V.

“ When sinks the blaze of fancied worth,  
Whose lustre fed the fire of love ;  
The fall for ever darkens earth,  
And dims the hope which rests above.”

BEFORE leaving the country, Agnes, whom the bare possibility of losing a letter from De Meurville would have rendered miserable, thought it necessary to take some precaution against such an event, though rather

at a loss by what means to do it ; for the servant who had hitherto inquired after the arrival of any letter at the post-office, would accompany them to town, and making another confidant was, to say nothing of the additional humiliation, a dangerous step. However, something like an intermediate measure presented itself, and promised to clear her of Scylla without wrecking her on Charybdis. This was suggested by her maid, who stated nothing to be easier than engaging an acquaintance of her own, in the neighbouring village, to receive and forward to her any letter that might come.

"And what will she think, Miss," said the former, laughing ; "but that it's from a sweetheart of my own, and that I prefer him directing to me by a different name ?"

Oh ! there are moments, and such ~~did~~ the good-natured, well-meant speech of her domestic render the present to Agnes, in which we think the acquisition of the world could not atone to us, for the mortification we feel in being put, by a condescension to artifice, on a level with our inferiors ! Her blood rushed to her face and neck ; and that she and Alice—that the beloved, or once beloved of De Meurville, and a low-bred attendant, should entertain any sentiment, or resort to any expedient, in common, was unutterably humiliating.

But it was not for Agnes now to display dignity which she had induced another to forget, therefore, saying quickly, "Well, Alice, take an opportunity soon of seeing your friend, for we shall be leaving the country, you know, in a few days, and I'll reward you both if you act discreetly ;" she left the room.

Though in expecting a letter from De Meurville, and expecting, as Agnes did, that that letter, elucidating all preceding ones, would regain him the place in her esteem which he could never lose in her heart, Miss Mandeville acted like her sex—who anticipate what they wish—who rely on what they love—who hope on the confines of despair ! she yet indulged expectations, of which there was little promise of fulfilment ; for a long time had elapsed since hearing from De Meurville,



and when she did, his letters had been written in a strain so cold, as to cut her to the heart—so cold, as to induce her to adopt a similar style in reply, and propose that it should end their correspondence ; thinking the latter would induce from him a confession of uneasiness with regard to her conduct, and entreaties to explain it, or of a revolution in his own heart—and to forgive it.

The latter, indeed, was a melancholy prospect ; but to the former she clung, and with all the security of innocence, desired only an opportunity of clearing herself from suspicions, which she could not but believe must have been infused into her lover's mind.

In short, Agnes, unsophisticated in the midst of corruption ; gentle, though witnessing in her mother and formerly in her eldest sisters the vilest passions ; and fond and ~~confiding~~, though perpetually hearing love and confidence laughed at as absurd ; was willing to suppose her De Meurville every thing but false to her, or at least capable of being so, without one parting word, one fond adieu to all their past affection ; one contrite confession of his unworthiness ever to have enjoyed ~~it~~ ; and looked forward to hearing from him, as to the arrival of some blessed goal which would terminate all her anxieties.

Seldom a week passed during the residence of the Mandevilles in London, in which one or more messengers did not go down to the country ; for, from Hermitage, they procured their fruit, vegetables, &c., and the impatience with which Agnes would expect their return—the ecstasy of hope in which she would fly to Alice, and demand, "Is there a letter?" would have caused her lover, could he have beheld it, bitter tears at the idea of ever having disappointed. But that it had been too often for even her sanguine heart any longer to be buoyed up with hope, the slackened pace, the wo-begone looks, the scarcely audible inquiry, which at the end of three months after writing to De Meurville succeeded to the eager step, the impatient glance, the agitated inquiry, bore ample testimony ; and if once the question was put in doubt, it was now demanded in

despair. But it was not always destined to be answered in the negative, for one evening, when all the family, except herself, were absent, and she, rather from custom than otherwise, went to look for Alice, knowing a messenger had just arrived from the country; she saw the latter with something, which at a nearer view proved to be a letter.

Like a frantic creature, Agnes seized it, and with trembling hands examined alternately the direction and the seal. The former addressed to the usual name, was written by him without a doubt; the latter was his impression, at a glance, and she kissed both. But the letter had been too long deferred, and Agnes had suffered too much from anxiety for its arrival to create those unmingled sentiments of joy it might once have done. On the contrary, she burst into tears, and when returned to the drawing-room, held it without attempting to open it, in a sort of convulsive clasp.

"If it should prove unkind," thought she, and the idea almost suffocated her; trembling she stood, her heart beating, her colour dying, and crimsoning on her cheeks alternately, her eyes and soon the letter drenched in tears. She sat down for a moment, and then impatient rose, advanced towards the window and looked out; but the noises of the streets, the rumbling of carriages were uncongenial sounds; and a wild foreign air that was playing near the house, had in it to her, something melancholy—she rushed into an inner room, there by a single light, which she had brought in and placed on the table, did Agnes kneel down; not, indeed, to address her heavenly Father, for she thought it would be impious to call on him to calm feelings which, though he has given man power to excite, he has given woman reason to restrain; but to contemplate the picture of De Meurville, which she took from her bosom, which she placed before her, which, as if the lifeless thing could hear her prayers, could behold her anguish, she implored not to disappoint all her hopes, which, crying, she fixed her eyes upon, as with a sort of desperate resolution she tore open the letter; it was short, very short.

She glanced first at the end, to be certain it was from De Meurville, then at the beginning, which commenced, death-blow to the wretched girl to whom it was addressed—"Madam,"—Agnes read no further, but fell to the ground. It thus proceeded: "I am weary of your letters, alternately filled with your reproaches and your affection; what I have done to deserve the former, I know not; whatever to have excited the latter, I know still less; you accuse me of having some other engagement, as if I had ever attempted to conceal it: as if, on the contrary, I had not often urged it in proof of the impossibility of our ever being happy together. You adjure me, by my honour, to remember the sacred vows that have passed between us, and you may rest assured I do; but equally may you, that whether I am the husband of another or not, I never, never, will be yours; and that common-place attentions should ever have deluded you into the idea I loved you, I deeply regret; but this letter, if none of my preceding ones have succeeded in doing so, will, I think, end the delusion; and now A——, if you would be wise, you would make happy some man, possessing advantages in every respect greater than mine, and enjoying health, spirits, and peace of mind, which your wretched De Meurville has lost for ever! though you are not, as you express a fear, the cause of it: let, as you desire, our correspondence cease; it can no longer answer any purpose on either side.

"And believe me to be, &c., &c.,  
"C. DE MEURVILLE."

This letter, carelessly written and interspersed with many erasures, was lying open by the side of Agnes, who was extended on the ground, when one of the folding-doors, which divided the drawing-room opened, and Alice entered. But had her parents, had De Meurville himself entered, it would not have disturbed the trance in which, white as statuary marble, Agnes lay. Alarmed at the sight of her young mistress, to whom she had come with the hopes of being able to congratulate her

on the contents which so wished-for a letter she thought must contain, Alice screamed, and rang violently for help; taking, however, in her fright the prudent precaution of thrusting the letter into her pocket, before she raised the inanimate Agnes.

"Alas! Alas!" cried she, when the servants began to enter; "what can have happened to my poor young lady? Here I came up, thinking she must be lonely by herself; and what did I find but the dear lovely creature lying like one dead!"

"Oh, mercy! mercy!" with every other ejaculation, exclaimed all the servants as they crowded round the sofa on which Agnes was now laid; "what can have happened to her?"

"She must have seen a ghost!" cried one.

"What nonsense you are talking," said another.

"Run one of you," said Alice, "for the doctor, and if he's not at home, do you, William, go for the apothecary, and say he must come instantly."

Despatches were sent in every direction, and drenches of vinegar and æther had a little revived Agnes before the arrival of the physician and apothecary, who came together. The former, after feeling her pulse, pronounced a sudden shock to have occasioned her fainting, and ordered instant bleeding to avert the fatal effects which a sudden rush of the blood from the heart to the brain was likely to occasion. This operation completely roused her, and she turned her dewy dovelike eyes on those around her. But to the inquiries of the physician as to what had alarmed her, and brought on her illness, she seemed at first unwilling, or unable to reply; but at length, bursting into tears, as if at the bare recollection, she said that something she had been reading frightened her.

Dr. Wilcourt, who was a friend as well as physician to the Mandeville family, and had long beheld the declining health of Agnes with a prophetic eye, now shook his head with the mournful expression of one whose fears some circumstance has confirmed, though not first created; and telling her kindly not to think of it any

more, and never again to read such things, he moved to a table to write a prescription. The housekeeper followed, and to her inquiring glance he returned a steady one, which seemed to say, "your young lady is not long for this world." Mrs. Terrance sighed audibly, and looked as if she could have sobbed ; but the physician, with a reproving countenance, called her attention to his directions for bathing the feet, preparing something warm, &c. which he continued to give while writing the prescription.

Though not a moment had elapsed after the return of Agnes to her senses, before she had whispered to Alice an agitated inquiry after the fate of her letter, it was not till she was in bed, and Mrs. Terrance departed to mull some wine, that she had an opportunity of getting it again into her own possession. The sight of the letter, (or rather recollections it brought to the mind of the writer) reminded Agnes of the picture of De Meurville, which she had left on the drawing-room table, and almost with a scream she implored Alice to go for it.— "Oh, run!—fly," she cried, "and let no one see it." Alice did run—did fly ;—and then her mistress recollected, for the first time, that it would betray to the former a secret she had studiously preserved from her, namely, who this lover so prized, so faithless, so unfeeling, so beloved, was ; and she felt tempted to follow her, and rescue De Meurville from the discovery ; but the speedy return of Alice, who (relying on the reflection of the moon, which was shining in the back drawing-room) had gone without a light, and the haste with which she demanded, as she put the portrait into the hands of her mistress, "Is this it ? for I hear Mrs. Terrance coming !" relieved Agnes from her fears ; and while she was hesitating whether to have the picture locked up, or restored to the bosom on which in tears De Meurville had first placed it, and in agony implored its remaining, the housekeeper entered ; and she had only time to put that and the letter under her pillow, with a determination to read the latter before morning.

The next morning, and many a morning, rose for Agnes, before she overcame the shock which a perusal of the Count de Meurville's letter gave her, containing at once sentiments so unkind, assertions so unfounded, heartlessness so undisguised, that when the outward effect of it on her constitution was less apparent, the inward preying of it on her heart was more destructive. He had wounded every feeling, he had crushed every hope, he had repulsed every overture, and his gentle Agnes was dying by the hand which she had once looked forward to for ever uniting her own.

Lady Mandeville was the person most insensible to her daughter's declining health; and while strangers remarked it, acquaintances lamented it, domestics commiserated it, she asserted her not to look differently from what she had always done, and only requiring greater dissipation to restore her spirits. Acting on this idea, her Ladyship took her out every night, totally regardless of cold, or of the cough which seemed ringing her knell; and kept her up waltzing, or singing, until day-break, laughing at the pity some ventured to express for the unfortunate victim, and unaware of the contempt and disgust all felt for so unfeeling a mother.

Agnes herself was a passive instrument, and while the cause of her ill-health was undiscerned, was indifferent to its continuance or amendment. Obligated to appear cheerful when her heart was breaking, and to assume interest when she felt none, she had acquired mechanical words and smiles, which to those who had not been previously acquainted with her, only gave the idea of her being extremely inanimate; but to those who had, of some mental malady having taken root, which no medicine could reach, and of which no heart but her own could tell the bitterness. The latter supposition was indeed most true: had there been any one who could participate in what she felt, it would have been some alleviation to her sufferings; but as it was, she was thrown entirely upon herself, and weighed

down by concealment of misery. In short, life at eighteen, became to Agnes Mandeville no longer desirable ; and the world in which De Meurville lived, no world for her !

## CHAPTER VI.

“For me what new frowns of Misfortune remain,  
For me now the longest, yet last in her train ;  
Does the tempest still brood o'er my ill-fated head ;  
While Hope, and her fanciful pleasures are fled ?  
Shall I fly to the cell where Despair sits alone,  
And mark with deep sorrow each mouldering stone ?  
Or madly embrace what I cannot avoid,  
And mock all the blessings I once had enjoyed ?”

DERMODY.

SUMMER had once more returned, and once more found the Mandevilles assembled at Hermitage, different in some respects from the family they had been when last there ; and in more, from what they had been when first introduced to our readers.

The marriage of Lady Ossulton had proved productive of none of those advantages her mother had fondly anticipated ; and that of Mrs. Russell had before the expiration of twelve months been annulled, under circumstances of notoriety and infamy. Of the former they had seen nothing since her leaving them, and all her letters betrayed, though they did not confess, deep depression and disappointment. To the Earl she alluded but seldom ; to the anxious inquiries of her mother after her health, happiness, &c. she returned indirect replies ; and any arrangements of the latter for their meeting, or having some of her family with her, were evaded, or postponed to indefinite periods. In short, over the fate of the Countess hung an impenetrable, though visible, gloom ; and the total seclusion in which every account of her, reported her living, and

the little consequence that her title had brought with it, either to herself or her connexions, while it mortified the latter, delighted many a heart which had bitterly envied her ever possessing it.

But if Lady Mandeville's vanity was wounded by the conduct of one child, would it not seem natural that her heart should be much more by the guilt of another? and that if Lady Ossulton's not enjoying the celebrity, and mixing in the grandeur, which would have gratified her was annoying, Mrs. Russell, plunged by her mother's injudicious counsels into a wilderness of misery and guilt, was dreadful! But such was not the case with Lady Mandeville; and even the experience of the former being evidently rendered wretched by her ill-assorted marriage, and the latter, desperate to free herself from it, could not prevent her goading on another of her daughters to the same perdition, deluding her with the same hopes, anticipating for her the same pleasures, founding them on the same follies! In Agnes, indeed, she had not the efficient materials to work upon, which she had had in Madelina and Charlotte; and a ducal coronet, which would have turned the head of either of her sisters, might have solicited her acceptance for ever in vain, had she not been actually maddened into a promise of receiving it by the cruelty of her mother; who finding entreaties and tenderness unavailing, resorted to unkindness and punishments the most unjustifiable, such as it would have been thought the dying looks of Agnes would have prevented her enforcing; but neither they, nor a consideration of the shattered, shrivelled being into whose arms she wished to throw her, had any effect in softening Lady Mandeville towards her daughter, until she gained her consent to a marriage with the Duke of Westennera; and then, indeed, all her severity was exchanged for blandishments; then all the wishes of the former, were but too limited to gratify her mother's desire of pleasing her. But then all compliance was vain, all kindness was lavished on a wretched, heart-broken creature, whom, after dragging to the brink of the grave, she vainly at-



tempted to re-animate with hope and joy; on a creature, whom, to judge from her looks, hope could never exhilarate, and to whom joy could never more be known!

Inspiring, as she did in every beholder, impressions so melancholy, it may seem astonishing that any man but the one who had caused all her grief, however he might commiserate her, should desire to obtain her for a bride; and even the Duke of Westennera, at the height of his infatuation, often wondered at it himself. But there was a something so angelically innocent, so celestially calm, in the person and mind of Agnes, as to deify her in his imagination, and make him look upon her as an angel, connected with whom he should learn to repent all his past profligacy, and abjure any future; in comparison with whom, superior beauty, fortune, rank, became contemptible; and to bestow honours and dignity in this world, on a creature whom, of all he had ever seen, he fancied most capable of leading him to eternal bliss in the next, became the most ardent desire of the Duke of Westennera.

Little did Agnes imagine the task that was prepared for her; or that she, herself on the brink of eternity, was expected to prepare a fellow creature for it, and one for whom any sentiment she entertained, must be that of disgust; the Duke having shown so little delicacy in his pursuit of a heart, which he evidently saw revolted from him, and of which, when he could not obtain the affections, he asked but the owner. How he ever came to have it in his power to demand either may seem extraordinary; but it was occasioned by one of those unlooked-for accidents which sometimes occur. Travelling in the part of Surrey where Hermitage lay, his Grace had been attacked by a violent fit of the gout, which impeded his journey, and laid him up at a wretched inn in the neighbourhood. Hearing of his situation, the Mandevilles immediately contrived an easy method of his being brought up to their house, and from the time of his arrival to the present, which comprehended about a month, treated him with every hospitality. To that, and to the love he felt for Agnes, were

they indebted for his prolonged stay, all symptoms of his gout having disappeared at the end of a fortnight ; and now it seemed settled that he was but to leave them with Agnes as his wife :—with Agnes, who had neither strength left to oppose her fate, nor spirit to endure the altercation that resistance would produce, but who prepared to submit to it with the desperation of despair, wanting one completion alone to all her woes—that of hearing De Meurville was married ; which intelligence accidentally come to her knowledge.

Walking one evening alone, at some distance from the house, and in a retired part of the grounds, she was surprised by meeting a young man of genteel appearance, who, at her approach, seemed slightly embarrassed, and who, when she, after returning his salutation, was about to move on, accosted her with an apology for being found intruding there, confessing that an irresistible desire of taking a sketch had led him.

“Apologies are unnecessary,” said the lady, faintly ; and, without further remark, would have passed on, when the stranger, turning with her, again addressed her.

“I am a foreigner, Madam,” said he, “taking a pedestrian tour through England, and among the beautiful places it has been my lot to see, in travelling through that interesting country, I have beheld few equal in loveliness to this.”

Rather afraid of provoking rudeness by total inattention to her companion, whose familiarity yet displeased her, Agnes asked from what country he came.

“From Germany,” was the reply.

“From Germany !” repeated Agnes involuntarily ; and a thousand recollections rushed to her heart at that moment.

Evidently perceiving the emotion he had created, the stranger inquired if she had any friends residing there, respecting whose welfare he might have the happiness of informing her.

“None, that it is probable you should know,” returned she, restored to her self-possession, and ashamed

that he should have seen her for a moment deprived of it.

"And yet," said he, "my acquaintance is extensive, especially about Court. Indeed, from some of the first noblemen at it, I have received letters of introduction to many families in England."

A single inquiry was now only necessary to satisfy Agnes as to whether his acquaintance comprehended the Count de Meurville; but that she was unequal to making, and fortunately was saved the necessity, by the stranger mentioning the name of the Count among that of others.

"The Count De Meurville," said he, "is a particular friend of mine; and possibly you may have met with him, for he was travelling in this part of England lately, and stopping at Sir William Mandeville's in this neighbourhood, to whom by-the-by, though he forgot to give me a letter, he desired me to make thousand remembrances if I should meet with him, or any of his family."

Agnes, agitated to the last degree, both at hearing thus suddenly of De Meurville, and at the free manner of the stranger in whose power she entirely was, could scarcely utter an intelligible reply; but fearing to make none, and wishing to make the shortest, murmured out that she knew him.

"A very gentlemanly man," continued her companion. "Pity that he should have thrown himself away so early in life."

"How?" before she was aware of it, Agnes had exclaimed.

"Why, by making a very inferior sort of marriage," returned the other. "He was betrothed, as probably you might know, to a lady of great rank and fortune; but breaking his engagement with her, not quite justifiably though she is horrible ugly, is going to be married to a pretty girl without fortune."

Time was when such a communication would perhaps have struck Agnes dead; but now she was too much inured to suffering, too much prepared to hear the

worst of any event, to be totally overcome by it ; and, unchecked by any emotion so unsolicited by inquiry on her part, the stranger volunteered more information with regard to the Count.

"It was said," he continued ;—"perhaps living in the neighbourhood, you know something of it,—that my friend was to have been married to one of Sir William Mandeville's daughters ; but I heard from his own lips there was no foundation for the report ; indeed, he laughed at the idea."

Agnes stared wildly at her companion ; was he a demon ! or what was he, thus come to torment her ? What could he suppose the Count de Meurville's affairs were to her, unless he knew whom he addressed ; and if he did, merciful Heavens ! was she a creature to excite malevolence ? Did that wasted form require any additional wo to bend it to the earth ; that heart one added throb to hasten its annihilation for ever ?

The sight of her sister Arabella approaching was a welcome sight to Agnes, and she would have run to meet her ; but, exhausted by her walk, she was unequal to it, and only came up to her at the same time with the stranger, who still continued to walk beside her.

"I am afraid," said the latter, as bursting into tears Agnes hid her face on the neck of her sister, "I am afraid I was most unintentionally the means of alarming this young lady, for she has appeared agitated ever since she met me."

"She is in a very delicate state of health," returned Arabella ; more at a loss to conjecture who the stranger was, than surprised at the agitation of her sister, which had of late been often occasioned by the most trifling circumstances.

"That renders it more unfortunate," said the other, "that I should have alarmed her."

"Tell him to go away," murmured Agnes, clinging to her sister ; "tell him but to go."

"I was taking a sketch of this lovely place," said the stranger, "when that young lady met me ; and having been the means of frightening her, fully punishes

me for my presumption, in having come here without leave ; but I will no longer intrude, and with a thousand apologies for this unhappy rencontre, allow me to wish you a good evening."

So saying, the stranger left them, and was in a few minutes out of sight. Arabella then turned to her sister for explanation of the whole, which she gave her, so far as saying that her agitation had been occasioned by suddenly meeting him, and by the free manner in which he had entered into conversation with her ; but she carefully abstained from any allusion to what had been the principal subject of the latter ; and when her sister remarked his foreign accent, did not even inform her of the country from whence he came : for Germany could not be pronounced by Agnes without some betraying emotion, and that might produce a torrent of suspicions even to the dull comprehension of Arabella, most unpleasant to her sister, who as she had suffered so long in secret, determined on continuing to do so, and betraying the cause of her griefs to none, unless indeed it were to *him*, who in the world alone could alleviate them.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*"Live while ye may, yet happy pair,  
Enjoy till I return—short pleasures  
For long woes are to succeed."*

MILTON.

No revenge has been pronounced so bitter as that prompted by love turned into hatred, and the demoniac manœuvring which Annette Dettinghorffe, disappointed in her hopes of inspiring affection in the Count de Meurville, was now exercising against him, stood in support of this assertion. It was through her means that Agnes was led to believe the latter unfeeling and

ungrateful; he who, of all mankind, least deserved such an imputation; he who, if he had, would to her least have proved it; and that the Count, in his turn, was compelled to entertain similar suspicions of the creature whom he still loved to idolatry, and for whose sake—nothing but her rectitude had prevented him long ago renouncing his country, his connexions, his God! Annette effected this by a train of stratagem, which perhaps no other head than her own would have been perverted enough to suggest, no other heart than her own vile enough to approve.

From the period of her being betrothed to the Count de Meurville, which had not taken place till she was past twenty, to that of the latter's departure for England, though he had never displayed that affection due, she thought, from an affianced husband to the partner of his future life, he had never wounded her by that extreme indifference, which all his letters from the latter country manifested, and for the cause of which, when she heard of the beauty of the Miss Mandevilles, she was not at a loss to account. Some brighter eyes than her own had proved his attraction. In some more snowy bosom did her De Meurville's heart lie buried; and maddened by this suspicion, which every thing tended to confirm, Annette, in correspondence with her lover, alternately resorted to indignation and blandishments. Sometimes he was the most cruel, the most ungenerous, the most worthless of men; at others the dearest, the most amiable, the most worthy to be beloved! Whatever he was, it was as little in the power of Annette's hatred to render him miserable, as in that of her love to make him happy; and he smiled at both, determining, however, not to excite the former while he discouraged the latter; but such a middle course was not to be preserved with her. He should hate, or he should idolize her; he should be her husband, or her direst foe. The same spot should contain them, or the same world should not; and to ascertain which of these opposites would be his fate, she determined, at last, on herself going to England and watching his proceedings.

To England therefore she came, and saw the confirmation of all her fears ; whether she beheld Agnes and De Meurville in the midst of the crowded church, the splendid opera, or the thronged theatre, they still appeared as lovers to each other, at least in her eyes, and

“ ’Twas sight hateful,—sight tormenting.”

How speediest to part them—how most effectually to destroy their attachment, became her only anxiety. For accomplishing the latter she relied on her influence at Court, and was not disappointed.

The Count, at her secret instigation, was recalled ; but to make his recall productive of the effect she desired, it was now necessary to intercept the correspondence which, as she foresaw, ensued between himself and his beloved. This was a matter of no small difficulty, for De Meurville took all his letters for Agnes to the office himself, and, unless she could make acquaintance with some one in it, who for a bribe would secrete them, there seemed no apparent method for her getting at their possession. This however she effected ; and every epistle of the Count to his English fair, as well as those of the latter to him, were in future consigned to her hands.

The perusal of them fully enlightened Annette as to the hopes they both entertained of her being induced to marry some one else ; and though that was now her own resolve, yet she determined to give De Meurville no reason to suspect the same. On the contrary, she endeavoured from the moment of his arrival, to prove to him that indifference on his part had not alienated her affection, and that she was not only ready, but anxious to become his wife. Disgusted with her servility, weary of her importunities, the Count, to avoid her presence, and determined not to marry her, proposed that they should correspond ; and Annette affecting to attribute this to an excess of affection, which in her presence he could not express, consented with delight.

“ Yes, write to me, my De Meurville,” she said, “ if

your lips cannot utter what your heart must feel for one who idolizes you ; who, during your long absence has never ceased to think of you, and who would rather be your mistress than another man's wife."

In short, they maintained a correspondence, which was the very point to which Annette wished, thinking, that as it would, at her request, be carried on in English, and as she had, on some frivolous pretext, requested him to avoid all local subjects, as well as a mention of her name, she might occasionally substitute one of these frigid epistles for the many fond ones she detained from Agnes, and elicit by this means, some reply from the latter that could be safely forwarded to the Count de Meurville, as bearing marks of indifference which would irritate him to renounce her : but in this scheme she was disappointed ; for, different as were these letters from what Agnes had ever before received, they were too welcome to her, after his apparently long silence, not to be received with a pleasure, and replied to with a kindness most provoking to Annette, who determined that this should not remain the case, and that she would at last extort some answer from her, which would prove a death-blow to De Meurville's love, and by showing Agnes indifferent to him, satisfactorily account for the silence of which she was every day afraid the Count would take effectual means to discover the cause ; for his letters, all of which Annette had in her possession, were certainly written in such strains of tenderness, as he must suppose Agnes turned to marble if she could be insensible to.

As a method of accomplishing the plan she purposed, Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe artfully changed the style of her own epistles to De Meurville, and from expressions of adoration, which had compelled his gratitude, though not excited his love, descended to reproaches which at once annihilated the former, and precluded any possibility of his ever entertaining the latter, while it effected the end she desired of producing one from him calculated to cut to the heart her to whom, on receiving, Annette immediately despatched them ; and



finally of eliciting from Agnes a letter, which Annette fearlessly allowed to reach De Meurville, as it contained but a request that their correspondence might cease for ever. What the Count de Meurville must feel at the apparently unaccountable conduct of Agnes, may be imagined; what he would have felt, had he known that she on whom he doted was the victim of an artful woman's cruelty, and had nearly lost her life, as we recounted in a previous chapter, by the reception of a letter intended for Annette, cannot yet be known. Pride sustained him in the one case, for he could not but suppose that absence had lessened his interest in Agnes's heart, and probably induced her to bestow it on some one else; but the other would be a grief admissible of no such consolation, and life, love, every blessing he would deem too little to devote to a creature who for him had suffered so much. Whatever influenced the conduct of Agnes however, De Meurville determined once more to visit England, and judge of its justice; once more to behold the country in which he had enjoyed so much happiness; and the woman whom he had loved so well."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

"The proudest, loftiest, must confess  
The sweetest power—the power to bless!"

According to his annual custom, and notwithstanding the contempt expressed by his Lady at the idea, Lord Glenallan proposed, a short time after his arrival at their Castle, in Scotland, to give a *fête champêtre* to the tenantry, which should conclude with a dance on the lawn, or in the hall of Glenallan, and be graced by the presence, if not joined in by the company stopping at his house. To all but the Marchioness, the prospect of this day afforded pleasure; and when it arrived,

when, partaking of the excellent cheer prepared for them, a thousand happy faces were arranged in different groups before tables spread for their reception ; all but her Ladyship mingled with delight among them, and walking from one to the other entered with condescending familiarity into their mirth. Now a Noble Peer whispered something arch to a pretty smiling girl, and now a blushing peasant paid his rustic compliment to a high born belle, as she helped him to some dainty he was too modest to touch himself. Over the whole, Lady Glenallan, from a window in the drawing-room, cast an eye of the most profound contempt : the sight of her Lord bustling about, his countenance heated but beaming with benevolence, turned her sick ; while even Lord Arabin, her ever perfect Earl of Arabin, had, she thought, looked more in his element, and would now, paying attentions to her, than seeming so vastly amused with the wit of a parcel of country girls.

But how Isabel, her refined, her sentimental-looking Isabel, could enjoy the throng, seemed most surprising ! that she did was very apparent, for Lady Glenallan had never seen her in better spirits in the midst of a crowded ball-room in London, than she was now in the midst of rural festivity, romping with a pretty child among the hay, or flirting with Douglas under the umbrageous foliage of an oak. The fact was, Lady Isabella Ireton had a craving vanity, which, while it received the food of admiration, made her happy in any situation ; and playing the elegant hoyden of an hay-field was as likely to obtain her compliments, as dancing at a birth-night, or languishing at an opera. Now the Marchioness Glenallan, on the contrary, had a preponderance of pride, which would have prevented her courting the very popularity she would have delighted in.

It was with no very amiable looks and words, that the latter received the Marquess, who, out of pure good-nature, came in more than once to try and prevail on her to join them on the lawn, and finally she answered him with an asperity which prevented any future intrusions on her Ladyship's dignity, at least from her

husband : it was reserved for a more successful pleader, in the person of Lord Arabin, to induce her to change her resolution of not appearing.

"My dear, lovely Lady Glenallan," said the Earl, with that freedom which a man will venture to use, when he knows it is not displeasing, "why will you not come down to us, it would delight these people so, indeed it would, and you must, you really must," he added, gently drawing her hand in one of his own.

"No," said her Ladyship faintly, "indeed I can't; don't ask me, Lord Arabin."

"But why not? why won't you?" said the Earl, in an insinuating tone, "what can I say to induce you?"

"Oh! your request alone would be sufficient," replied she; "but—"

"But what?" my angel, he looked as if he could have added; "what should prevent you; why will you deprive us of the happiness of seeing you?"

"The happiness, my Lord," she repeated; "you can, at least, answer for but one being deprived of happiness."

"That I can answer for one being to a greater extent than all the rest, is certain, Lady Glenallan, but that others are too, I am convinced."

"I don't know what I might have done," said the Marchioness, "had not Lord Glenallan so bored and tormented me about it, but as it is, I know it would just gratify him if I went out, and I hate the idea of its doing that."

"Amiable wife!" thought Lord Arabin to himself. "But lovely Lady Glenallan," he said, "will you punish others for his sins? will you not be entreated by the brother of Isabel?"

"If I thought they'd care to see the child," observed Lady Glenallan, in an hesitating tone, "I'd take out James—but—"

"Oh, they would, indeed they would," cried Lord Arabin. "Let me ring for the nurse; let's have his little lordship and take him out with his beautiful mamma."

So saying, the Earl rang, and unchecked by any thing but the looks of the Marchioness, which still augured doubtful approbation, desired Lord Mantalpine to be brought.

In a few minutes, and supported in the arms of his nurse, was brought the beautiful little Earl, who, but lately awoke from sleep, was in no very amiable mood, and continued to rub his great dark eyes and rosy cheeks, as in sullen-scrutiny he fixed the former alternately on his mother and Lord Arabin.

"My child!" said her Ladyship, extending her arms to receive her boy—but unaccustomed to the honour of being caressed by her, he clung to his nurse. "You must come to your mamma, James," she said, "or she'll be quite jealous."

"Come, now, you must go to my Lady," said the nurse, extricating his little arms from about her; "indeed you must, my lord; so don't be so sulky."

"Come to me, Mantalpine!" cried Lord Arabin; "you and I are great friends, and we'll have nothing to say to mamma."

"Oh no, he'll go to my Lady," said the nurse, as the little nobleman held out his arms to the latter, but kept his eyes fixed on a glittering watch-chain the Earl of Arabin suspended before him, and for which, when withdrawn from him by the Earl's going into the next room to get Lady Glenallan's shawl and bonnet, he was putting up his coral lips to cry, but a promise of his black hat and feathers restored something like complacency to the brow of the little Earl, and in a sort of sullen dignity he was presently taken out on the lawn in the arms of his beautiful mother; at sight of whom, looking so lovely, so innocent, so unlike any thing but a creature in whose bosom dwelt every virtue, the people gave a shout of joy! her health was drank with enthusiastic cheers; and as she held up her interesting child, they almost, in tears of gratitude at her condescension, rent heaven and earth with prayers for that of Lord Mantalpine, who unaware of being the object of all this commotion, looked about him.

"With something like displeased surprise,"

and apparently was not sorry when the ringing of the dinner-bell took him with all the company into the Castle. But Lady Glenallan seemed deeply affected by manifestations of regard she had done nothing to deserve, and lingering with Lord Arabin somewhat behind the rest, thanked the people near her for their good wishes. "It delighted her," she said, "to receive them, it should be her study to deserve them; she would remember them while she had life."

When the Marchioness could occasionally appear so amiable, it only made it the more lamentable that she should almost invariably appear the contrary; that education should ever have spoiled what nature once made so delightful. But this evening, nature or something more efficient than nature, seemed to triumph over the habitual hauteur of Lady Glenallan, and to the surprise of all, she proposed herself opening the dance, for which in the evening the people assembled in the hall, and did so with an affability which charmed the beholders. For after all, to see a creature exalted in rank, in talents, in beauty, in all that can elevate one human creature above another, mingling promiscuously with her inferiors, had in it something noble; something which inclined one to forget her pride of those distinctions, and remember only how great they were.

## CHAPTER IX.

" Proud has been my fatal passion,  
Proud my injured heart shall be ;  
While each thought and inclination  
Proves that heart was formed for thee.

Not one sigh shall tell my story,  
Not one tear my cheek shall stain :  
Silent grief shall be my glory,  
Grief that stoops not to complain."

PURSUANT to his intention, and at the expiration of rather more than a year since he had left it, the Count de Meurville prepared again to visit England, though under very different circumstances from when he had taken leave of it : then he had been unhappy indeed from parting with Agnes, and from the little prospect there seemed to be of his being freed from the tie that bound him ; but love had soothed him, and hope had whispered consolation. Now he was released from his engagement by the marriage of Annette with another, but "hope and her fanciful visions were fled." Agnes was certainly the betrothed, if not the property of some happier man, and her De Meurville, declining in health and spirits, sunk under the misery which such a conviction occasioned ; though he was too proud to own it even to himself, and to her he thought he would sooner have died than done it ; but he did not know that changed, unhappy, dying, was his once beloved Agnes, and as incapable of triumphing over his wretchedness, as she had ever been of creating it. On the contrary, seeing her intended marriage with the Duke of Westennera announced in an English paper, he pictured her to himself as forgetful of her past love, and anticipating with delight an alliance which would exalt her next to royalty, surrounded with bridal paraphernalia, and enjoying brilliant prospects, regardless whether they comprehended matrimonial happiness.

Little, in forming these suspicions, did De Meurville appreciate Agnes, or rather more did he recollect her in them as the daughter of Lady Mandeville, and the sister of the Countess of Ossulton, than as the creature whose innocence had first fascinated his heart, and whose fondness had finally enslaved it. But however changed he might imagine Agnes in disposition towards himself, he never could have imagined to meet a sister of hers, so lost, so fallen, as it was his lot, when stopping at Paris on his way to England, to discover Charlotte, who, from the time of leaving her husband, had fallen into the most abandoned courses, and who, when she was seen by the Count de Meurville, was lying unattended but by the people of the house, and apparently half delirious in an upper apartment of an hotel. It was evening when the Count at her request entered it, and the shock he received at seeing Charlotte, whom he had left in England a blooming bride, now extended on a bed,

“Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,”

her countenance ghastly emaciated, her large dark eyes rolling with frenzy around her and finally settling on him with a look of wild recognition, was very great; for Charlotte, though destitute of the qualities which excite love, and of the delicacy which De Meurville, like all men who have seen much of women, most admire in them, had been dear to him as the sister of Agnes. And to see her, to see any thing which bore affinity to that once loved creature, so degraded, was melancholy. De Meurville could have wept at the sight, but pity was somewhat lost in surprise and horror by the manner of Charlotte.

“Is it you? Is it De Meurville?” she said in a hurried tone, as he entered, and she pulled aside the bed-curtains. “Ah, it is! they told me right,” she added quickly, answering herself. “But why do you look so amazed? “What do you see in me?”

“Oh Charlotte, is it thus, and here we meet?” he answered, taking her wasted hand in his.

"'Tis here, and thus," she replied; "where else, how else should we? We have met in scenes of joy, indeed; but joy is fleeting! We meet in sorrow now, and sorrow will be for me eternal! But ere you return to that vile place, that hell on earth—that scene of sin—that abode of deception to which you are going, listen to my last command. Bear my dying curse to my mother; tell her you saw her child on the bed of death; and that on that last receptacle she cursed her—she loathed her very name—she hated life, and her that gave it; tell her, tell her, De Meurville—"

"Oh cease, in mercy cease," said the Count, leaning his head against the bedstead, "I cannot bear this."

"No, because it is truth, and you know it truth," said Charlotte wildly. "Go to Lady Ossulton and ask her if it is not. Go to Arabella, that wretched degraded girl, see if she can say otherwise; and then tell Agnes Mandeville, as she values her salvation, she must not reside with her mother. Tell her, De Meurville, that not content with ruining her in this world, she will ruin her for ever in the next."

"These may be truths," said De Meurville, almost groaning with agony, "but they are such as I wish not to hear. Is it to the betrothed husband of your sister you would make confessions so dreadful?"

"Of my sister!" repeated Charlotte. "Is it of Agnes that you speak?"

The Count made a sign of assent, but not by words.

"Oh, she will be happy then," cried Charlotte, "for she will be with you. She will be a blessed, blessed creature! for you will be her husband—her protector—her friend."

"All, all!" murmured the Count, "if she still permit it: but let me be the last at least to you, let me, as a friend, Charlotte."

"No, no!" interrupted the latter, quickly. "I want no friend. Reserve for your happier Agnes all the admonition you would vainly bestow on me; she will listen in submission, but I cannot; she will live by them and you, but I am lost for ever. And now leave me,



leave me, De Meurville, for you are distracted, and I am undone ; you never can restore me to peace, and I wish not to deprive you of it."

"For the present I will leave you," inaudibly articulated the Count, returning the convulsive clasp of her hand with an averted face, "but I will see you again in a short time."

"Not to-night—not to-night," returned Charlotte, quickly——— And for her another morning never rose.

\* \* \* \* \*

It may easily be imagined that this distressing interview was little calculated to raise the spirits of De Meurville ; and that on the contrary, it increased the gloomy anticipations he could not but indulge with respect to his Agnes. For if Lady Mandeville were indeed the fiend, and Hermitage the hell, which Charlotte, who best knew both had declared, what might not have happened to his beloved, what might she not have been induced in desperation to do ! "Ah, Agnes," he mentally exclaimed, "how true have my prophecies proved, how speedy, how very speedy has been their fulfilment."

But to what extent they had been fulfilled De Meurville was yet to know, and could not, till he had been himself at Hermitage, where he was invited, as soon as his arrival was announced in London, and for which, having no business in the latter, he immediately set out.

It was on a beautiful Sunday evening, at the beginning of August, that De Meurville stopped in a village, situate about half a mile from the Castle, and being fatigued from his journey, as well as depressed in spirits, he determined on remaining at the inn until dusk, when he could walk to Hermitage : amusing himself in the mean time by watching from a window the people who were entering a church opposite for divine service, and recognising in many of them acquaintances of former times, eyes that had often brightened, and lips that had often laughed, when in his morning rides or evening walk with the Mandevilles he had called forth their ani-

mation by careless gayety. But it was not till the bell had nearly ceased to toll, that there entered the church-yard three persons more calculated to arrest the attention of De Meurville than all the rest, for they were at a glance three of the Mandeville family, and one he suspected his Agnes, but she was so enveloped in a veil as to leave it doubtful, till, while the others moved on, apparently at her desire, to the church, she stopped to relieve a beggar-woman who had solicited her charity, and then throwing back the veil, which had concealed her features, De Meurville recognised the coral lips and violet eyes of Agnes, but around those lips there played no smiles, and those eyes were violets wet with dew.

“Alas!” exclaimed the Count, “if Agnes Mandeville weeps, what floods of tears are not prepared for the Duchess of Westennera! If on the eve of bridal joys you sigh, what will you not do at their consummation? Oh, Agnes! it was these arms that were destined to receive thee; it was these eyes that should for ever have chased tears from thine!” But while he spoke, Agnes joined her companions and entered the church, and he was left but to gaze on the spot where she had stood, asking his heart if it were in reality her, or a vision he had beheld.

The sight had, as may be imagined, disqualified De Meurville for any thing but thought, and he threw down a book, which a moment before he had taken up, and began to pace the room. But it seemed too limited to contain him, and before he was aware of it, he had wandered out on the road which, shady, deserted, and breathing the balmy fragrance of summer, had in it at the same time something depressing—something which rather reminded De Meurville of the past, than cheered him as to the future: and the lowing of cattle, the occasional notes of birds, and distant whistle of the shepherd, were all at that moment melancholy sounds! To escape from them, De Meurville, scarcely heeding where he went, turned into a cottage, before which flourished a beautiful little garden, and sinking on a seat asked permission to rest after his walk.

"And welcome, Sir," said a decent-looking woman, laying aside a Bible which she had been reading, and handing him a better chair than that which he had taken.

"I am very well seated," said the Count, "thank you, and now don't let me disturb you."

"No disturbance at all," returned she, "I was but watching our house here, Sir, while the rest are gone to church."

"Church seems well attended in the evening," observed De Meurville; "I was looking at the congregation entering just now."

"Oh, very, Sir!" returned the woman; "much better than it was last summer; for now the Baronet's family generally go, which is a great check against other people staying away. Do you know the Baronet's family, Sir?" "Too well," hovered on the lips of the Count, "but very well," was his reply. "I am going on a visit to them."

"Perhaps you haven't seen them for a long time, Sir? and indeed if you haven't you'll see a sad change—all the beautiful young ladies are married, or going to be."

"Not all, I think," said the Count, smiling; "but even so, is that so sad a change?"

"Then to my mind it is," returned the woman. "I never see a young thing going to be married, who has hitherto had no cares but about her beauty, and her dress; and her accomplishments, but what I say to myself, 'Ah! she'll have many more! and had much better remain as she is.'"

"I hope you don't preach that doctrine to all the young ladies about here," said the Count, "or the gentlemen will have no chance."

"It would be of little use for me, Sir, they'll always have too much; and if they had not themselves, there's mothers to recommend them—as indeed poor Miss Agnes Mandeville is an instance. She, Sir—but perhaps you know her—the loveliest, sweetest creature that ever eyes were set upon, who it's a sin to make do any

thing she dosen't like, is going to be married to a great duke, by my Lady's desire ; for as for the poor thing herself, she would as soon marry the greatest wretch living."

"Is he so very disagreeable," inquired the Count, "that all his rank and fortune will not counterbalance it?"

"In Miss Agnes's eyes I am very sure he is, Sir," said she ; "for she's fretting herself to death at the very idea of marrying him ; and from the very first of his coming there she always hated him. And when she and her Sister, Miss Arabella, used to come here on an evening, and I'd say, 'Well, Miss Agnes, when you'll be marrying his Grace of Westennera,' she'd look so grave, though she'd be smiling a moment before ; 'and when you hear of that,' she'd say, 'you may expect to hear of any miracle.' Those were the very words, she said, Sir ; but indeed it wasn't often that she'd come here, for she wasn't equal to it, and now I never see her, except it be once in a way at church. They say she's going off fast in a decline, and indeed it's a melancholy fate for a beautiful girl like Miss Mandeville."

"Most melancholy," observed the Count, with a sigh, "but I should hope—"

"Alas ! Sir, for her there's no hope ! for it isn't that she doesn't love his Grace of Westennera only, but that she loves another, they say, and the most accomplished gentleman that ever eyes were set on. He came from foreign parts, and was with them this time two years ; not that I saw him myself, for I was away that summer, but I hear he was the loveliest-looking man that could be fancied, and doted, above all things, on Miss Agnes."

"Pity that he should not have married her," observed the Count. "But did her father and mother know of her attachment?"

"Little matter if they did, Sir, for the Baronet would not have heeded it, nor my Lady, but as it might interfere with her plans ; and in truth I believe they did not,

it was only the tattle of the hall, but not the less truth for all that."

De Meurville sighed, and asked, "if the Countess of Ossulton had been in the neighbourhood lately."

"Not she, Sir, indeed, ever since she has been married; and report says she's not so happy as she ought to be. Oh! it was a sorry day in which she was ever given to that villain! for villain he was, whether he was Earl of Ossulton or King of England. And she hadn't been married an hour to him before he got quite cross at her for not hastening to go away from her own father's house. And she, poor thing! seeming so delicate, and dressed so beautifully all in white, for it was summer time, just this last year, not quite agitated, and before she was fairly off she fainted away three times; but my Lady, her mother, didn't mind, and said 'twas only nervous, that the journey would do her good. So she and my lord set off, and from that day to this, never a sight have we had of them; for to see him, indeed, nobody would give much; but she was such a charming young Lady!"

"She was indeed," said the Count.

"Then there was Mrs. Charlotte, Sir, a beautiful black-eyed girl, who used to ride so well, and had such spirits, she married in London, this year and a half nearly ago; and true enough, it was an unlucky affair."

"Most unfortunate," interrupted the Count, with a profound sigh; "I heard all about it."

"Well, Sir, and perhaps you know," said his communicative companion, "that Mr. Clermont is now an archdeacon."

"No," said the Count, rising, "that's news, but if he was a bishop, he could scarce make you a longer visitation than I have been doing."

"Not longer than welcome, Sir; and begging your pardon, it has been very short; but perhaps, before you go, you'd take a little fruit, some of our apricots or mulberries."

De Meurville took something, to have an excuse for

giving her money, and presently left the cottage, to prepare for going up to Hermitage ; at which place, however, he did not arrived till dusk. When he went there, the lights, the noise, the bustle, the crowd of servants, all recalled past times, and it was with difficulty he could prevent a formal announcement of himself, but against this he was determined, and made his way, unattended, to the drawing-room, previous to entering which, he met Sir William, who, very much broken in appearance, and rather low in spirits, was sitting with a newspaper in an adjoining room.

The Baronet expressed great pleasure at seeing De Meurville, who was always a favourite with him ; but after a little conversation, desired him to join his friends in the next apartment. The Count obeyed, and amidst the number which, sitting or standing in groups, filled it, the servants with tea-trays in every direction, and the buzz of conversation, which was not interrupted by the music of the piano, nor by the sweet voice which was warbling " Oh, had I the wings of a dove ! " he entered unperceived by all but Lady Mandeville, who was standing near the door, and who professed the greatest delight at seeing him : while speaking to her Ladyship Agnes came over to the latter, and without noticing who was standing beside her, whispered some request, to which her mother only replied by asking her if she had forgot her cousin. Quick as lightning Agnes raised her eyes, and when they met those of Clifford, past, present, future—all swam in wild confusion before her ; all that she had been ; all that she was ; all that she might have been, rushed to her recollection, and with every pulse beating, every feeling excited, she stood for a moment the trembling, lovely, blushing girl she had been when first she felt the pressure of De Meurville's hand, when first she heard the whisper of De Meurville's heart. But he spoke, and her agitation calmed. He made some slight inquiry after her health, and her beautiful colour was fled ; for it was in a manner so chilling as to make her forget any remembrance of their having been lovers in conviction

of their now being any thing else, and Agnes could have cried as she heard him. Fortunately Lady Mandeville's attention was attracted to something else, and she did not notice this extraordinary meeting; on the contrary, supposing they must have a great deal to say to each other, she turned away and left them together.

"Are your brothers here?" inquired De Meurville, as still holding the burning hand of Agnes in his, they walked to the upper end of the room.

"Yes, Sidney's there, he does not see you," returned she, calling to him as she spoke, "and Clermont was here a short time ago."

In a moment Mr. Mandeville crossed the room, and shook hands with his friend, expressing the greatest pleasure at seeing him, and the most animated hopes that he was in better health. De Meurville professed himself to be so, though his looks strangely contradicted the words, and declared that Surrey would effect any restoration yet wanting.

Arabella now came up to speak to her cousin, and in a short time he was recognised by almost every one in the room, except the Duke of Westenera, who was standing alone at the piano where Agnes had been playing, and regarding the Count with that sort of indefinite jealousy he felt of every one likely to interfere between himself and his beloved.

An introduction was presently proposed between his Grace and the Count, and it was not till that moment that Agnes was completely overcome; agitated, she released her hand from De Meurville, who, as if unconsciously, had continued to hold it, and fell behind the rest. But it was not, to her unutterable mortification, till De Meurville's eyes had met her starting tears, and beheld them and herself with that sort of compassionating glance with which we should view a fallen creature; "I pity you," it plainly said, and unable to bear pity where she had once inspired adoration, Agnes left the room for her own. In solitude there she at first gave way to grief the most unbounded; but something like pride presently checked it, and how to act towards

De Meurville, who had taken so extraordinary a step as to place himself in the very centre of a scene of which once the bare idea would have filled him with agony, became sole occupier of her thoughts; that a perpetual warfare between her pride and her feelings must be kept up, was plain, and did the attempt cost her her life she was determined on making it; for to appear still to love a man who, she had reason to believe, was the husband of another woman, and who had declared himself weary of her love, was too humiliating.

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## CHAPTER X.

"I wish'd to see that face again,  
Although 'twere changed to me;  
I thought it not such maddening pain,  
As ne'er to look on thee."

*From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.*

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

WITH that pleasure I must ever feel in obliging you, mingled with that melancholy I must also feel when the intelligence I have to communicate is unpleasing, I comply with your request of being written to as soon after De Meurville's arrival here as possible. On Sunday evening last, then, he came, and, though you will scarcely believe it, he was, I assure you, some time in the drawing-room without my being aware of it—without my being aware of it, who have so often felt his presence before I beheld it. What a revolution! but unfortunately one rather caused by the apathy of languor than the annihilation of love; for when I did recognise him it was with a sensation of joy bordering on frenzy. I could have fallen down and worshipped him had not his manner checked any such enthusiasm; but it was, indeed, of a nature to recall me to myself,

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and happy was I that not a syllable of the joy which overflowed my heart escaped my lips, for it would have caused my never-ending regret. On the contrary, though I was, as I observed before, delighted to the last degree at seeing him, I had rather the appearance of one stupefied with surprise ; and indeed De Meurville must have a vanity in his composition, which, among all his faults, I never yet discovered, if he could suppose that I loved him still ; nor do I farther than from the remembrance of how much he once loved me. But were I totally indifferent to him, it was not, you may imagine, without the most heartfelt anguish and shame that I could fancy him, supposing me attached to the Duke of Westennera, which introduced to the latter as my future husband, he must to a certain degree conclude. No ; I could not sustain the moment of their introduction, but quitted the room, leaving De Meurville to form what suppositions he chose ; that they were unfavourable to me, I cannot doubt, but I did not return to the drawing-room to be mortified by their expression.

When we met the next morning I had a clearer view of Clifford than the night before, and he looks to me very ill, though he is or affects to be, for I cannot altogether think them real, in good spirits, and talks of the past with unconcern, and of the future with indifference.

After breakfast he, with the Duke of Westennera, and two or three others, went to some races in the neighbourhood, and not returning till late, I saw nothing of him again till dinner-time, at which there being a great deal of company, we in no way came in contact, nor did we during the evening. Indeed, De Meurville I am convinced, without systematically appearing to do so, studiously avoids me, and you may be very sure I do not throw myself in his way ; on the contrary, I endeavour to appear occupied with every body else ; and never did the Duke of Westennera receive so much attention from me as he has done since the return of De Meurville ; in fact, I feel spirited to any conduct which may prove my indifference to the latter, and an-

icipate my marriage with the resignation a culprit would his departure from a world in which he had nothing left to live for. It may at least probe the heart I once vainly endeavoured to please—if De Meurville has a heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh ! he has ! he has a heart, wheresoever, howsoever, it may have been buried : and in De Meurville's bosom, though love may be obliterated, feeling remains ; though the world may contend, nature will be for ever victorious !" The other evening, he, my sister Rhoda, and I, were standing at one of the drawing-room windows, looking at that view of Abbeville which you so much admire, and which, illumined by a brilliant setting sun, appeared most beautiful, when the Duke of Westennera came up to me, and began rallying me about different young men then in the room. Disgusted with his facetiousness, I was about to turn away, but an inclination to make one lingering trial, if I yet possessed any influence over De Meurville, prevented me, and in reply to his Grace's questions, of whether I should not regret all these dashing young fellows, when I found myself married to an old man like him ; I replied, " That the happy wife of the Duke of Westennera, could entertain no regrets of any kind." Fixing my eyes, as I spoke, on those of De Meurville, which were in a moment suffused with tears, though he instantly averted them, and continued to look out of the window, as if at some far distant object ; neither his Grace nor my sister noticed this agitation, but I, in doing so, felt my triumph more than complete. A few minutes after, unobserved, as I thought, by him, I proposed to Arabella that we should take a walk, and both of us stole out of the room for the purpose, but we had scarcely proceeded as far as the shrubbery when De Meurville came out also, and asked permission to join us. Arabella instantly consented, but I began to complain of a headache, and was about to return in,

when the strangeness, if not the rudeness, of this proceeding struck me, and I yielded to the solicitations of my sister to continue my walk, leaving the burden of the conversation on her and De Meurville, the latter of whom said scarce any thing, so that our walk was not altogether very lively. The first thing that created any sensation in it, was our stopping at a cottage to see an old woman who had been very ill, and whom we were in the habit of visiting. As she was confined to her bed, it was necessary to go upstairs to see her, and the room above being very close, Arabella wanted to dissuade me from following her up, but having no inclination for a *tête-à-tête* with De Meurville, I insisted on doing so, the consequence I feared ensuing, of my becoming so faint that I was obliged instantly to return.

To my unspeakable relief, I found below the grandchild of the old woman, who had just come in, and seizing the poor child, before she was aware of it, I asked her to come to the garden and pull me some flowers. De Meurville was leaning against the door, and as I passed him, he took my hand, "Agnes!" said he, in somewhat the tone of former days, "De Meurville," returned I coldly, and moved on; but he followed me, and presently began talking to me in a low tone. He said, "he was very unhappy! that I had made him of men most miserable; that he knew not what he had done, to become so hateful in my eyes, that he desired but to know?"

I was not prepared for this: I did not think it was in man to be so plausible, and yet so perfidious, so cruel, and yet so deceitful. Tears began to fall from my eyes, and he perceived it. "Are these tears on the eve of bridal joys!" he said: "are these proofs of your being happy, Agnes?"

"I shall never more be happy," answered I.

"It was not so," he continued, "that you expressed yourself a short time ago; but perhaps it was to gratify the Duke of Westennera's affection you spoke otherwise?"

"Affection is false !"<sup>\*</sup> returned I, withdrawing from him the hand he took.

"Who taught you that sad lesson ?" asked De Meurville.

"He who fully proved its truth," said I. And my sister, Arabella, coming out of the cottage at that minute, I went forward to meet her, leaving De Meurville lost in thought, and apparently musing on my words. How extraordinary is his conduct ! Sometimes I think mine must have been misrepresented to him when he was abroad. But why did he not seek an explanation ? Whose lips should have more power to persuade than those of his Agnes ? To what arms should he fly for consolation, but to hers, in whose bosom he once swore for ever to confide his sorrows and his joys. But oftener I think that a report of his being attached to some one else is true, and this idea more than any other distracts me. Yet why should I care to whom De Meurville addresses love, since he neither ever will, or ever can address it again to me ? Whether Clifford suffers in mind I cannot tell you ; but in health he certainly does : and you never saw a man look so wretchedly ! It softens my feelings of indignation against him ; and if I thought his illness was in any way occasioned by sorrow for his conduct towards me, would for ever annihilate them. In truth, I feel myself too near the verge of this life to cherish any animosities, more especially against the man whom I once loved beyond the world. Farewell ! my dearest Catharine ! May a happier lot ever be your's than is that of your Agnes ; and around your marriage-day may there play brighter visions than are destined to illumine mine !

Believe me, &c. &c.

AGNES MANDEVILLE.

\* A reply of Queen Elizabeth's, when solicited at a masquerade to dance with a lady personifying "Affection," and supposed to be made in allusion to the Earl of Essex's ingratitude.

## CHAPTER XI.

*"The mask is off—the charm is wrought,  
And Selim to his heart has caught,  
In blushes more than ever bright,  
His Nourmahal, his harem's light."*

A WEEK had elapsed since the arrival of the Count de Meurville at Hermitage, and as every day brought him nearer to that in which he was to lose all hopes of Agnes for ever, every day found him declining in health and spirits. He would have sought an explanation with her, but she seemed to him to avoid it, and in fact Agnes did, for she did not suppose any thing could pass between them but what would serve uselessly to agitate her, and since her fate was inevitable, to have no farther remembrancer, that it might have been different, than the unavoidable one in her own bosom, was desirable. Such a reserve, on her part, made De Meurville wretched, and on the day but one before Agnes's marriage, when, from being ill, he did not join the family, he took the resolution of writing to her, and did so, as follows :—

"Indifferent as I am whether this letter, the last, perhaps, which I shall ever dictate, is read by Agnes Mandeville or the Duchess of Westennera; I yet address the former, as thinking it probable I may not have time to write to the latter, and that to die without some vindication of my conduct, would be unjust to myself, whether it would be desirable to her or not; casting aside, therefore, that pride which might once have prevented my condescending to an apparently undesired explanation, but which on the verge of eternity can no longer interfere to prevent my performance of any duty, I sit down to explain the circumstances which have actuated my proceedings from the time I left England, and then leave it to your own heart to deter-

mine whether they have justified yours. I left this country, wretched, indeed, at being separated from you, but secure in your affection, cheered by the prospect of hearing from, and writing to you, and blessed in the idea of one day possessing you: I return to it with every hope blasted, every anticipation disappointed, every blessing fled!

“Judge, Miss Mandeville, what must have been the power that could effect this, and then learn that it was only yours; that, as in this world you alone could render me happy, so in this world you alone could make me miserable; that you have done so most completely, I will not now add to your sufferings, or claim your pity, by declaring. The former I should not be human if I wished to increase; the latter, after having aspired to far higher distinctions, you cannot wonder if I would not condescend to receive. But though I reject your pity, I call upon your justice; and oh! Agnes, does its impartial voice acquit you? If it does, never more shall mine accuse you; but to my own presumption will I place what hitherto I have charged on your unkindness. On my quitting England, we mutually promised to correspond with each other, and the first two or three letters on each side were exactly what, parting on the terms we did, each had a right to expect from the other; but ever after, those on yours were characterized by a coldness, and finally by a cruelty, which the unvaried tenor of mine gave me but little reason to look for. Still, however, they did not irritate me to similar replies; I sighed over their heartlessness indeed; I lamented their brevity; I have been shocked at their injustice; but I exculpated myself from your accusations, as if I had deserved them; I soothed your reproaches as if I had merited them; I listened to your remonstrances as it becomes man ever to listen to woman, and would have continued to do so, had you not put it out of my power by requesting, in one short line, to be no more troubled with my letters. Oh, Agnes! never may your heart feel the pang which rent mine at that moment. It had not been from your hand that I expected such a

blow ; it was not from your lips I ever expected to receive condemnation ; but I did receive it, and from that sad moment, life, time, eternity, all appeared to me one dreary blank—the star I had worshipped left me in darkness—the angel I had idolized rejected my adoration. Agnes, on whom I doted, lived for another ; and for what should her wretched De Meurville now exist ? —it would seem to record his woes. But no, he should exist to prove her power not so absolute ; that not on her alone depended all his happiness—for this he should, but I find myself unequal to the task ; and content if I convince you that I have not deserved my fate, I unresistingly submit to its consequences. And now, farewell, Agnes !—farewell, Duchess of Westennera ! We shall probably never meet again in this world ; for, finding myself very ill, I purpose leaving your father's early to-morrow morning ; but may we, my Agnes, in that happier one where sin and sorrow will be no more known, for ever, and from which we shall look back on the troubles of this, as at the dawn of the morning we do on the dream of the night.

Yours, &c.,

CLIFFORD DE MEURVILLE."

P. S. I enclose in this a foreign letter, which I see by the direction is for you, though it came under cover to me."

These letters De Meurville took an opportunity to give Agnes before dinner, when, from hoping he should have been able to appear at table, he ventured down to the drawing-room, but finding himself unequal to it he again retired to his apartment. She was at first about to defer reading them, but irresistible curiosity led her not to do so, and taking them to her chamber, she sat down to peruse them. De Meurville's letter deeply affected her ; and, at a loss to conceive who the other could be from, she was going to open it when the ringing of the dinner-bell obliged her to delay doing so ; and with pale cheeks and starting tears she took her

place beside the Duke of Westennera. During dinner she said not a word, and before the cloth was removed, requested permission to retire on the plea of headache. Lady Mandeville made no objection, never wishing the Duke to see her to disadvantage, and Agnes returned once more to her letters. The foreign epistle was dated from Vienna and signed Theodore. Unaware of having any friend, or even foe, of that name, Agnes in surprise hastened to read the following :—

Madam,

Dying by the hand of the perfidious woman in whose artifices I was an accomplice, and for whose sake I bartered my own conscience and marred your happiness, I think it but fair vengeance, if not expiatory virtue to inform you, that it is to her machinations you may attribute any thing which has appeared extraordinary in the conduct of the Count de Meurville ; that she has detained letters of his to you, filled as I know with the most soul-subduing tenderness, and for which those sent to you, and addressed to herself, were most wretched substitutes. Take what means you please to discover this, and you will find it truth ; as is also, that I was the person you met some time ago, wandering, apparently accidentally in your father's grounds, and who gave you information of which I was perfectly aware of the falsity. I was there by orders of the fiend, from whose craftily administered poison I am now expiring, and whose hand and fortune was my promised reward ; but she basely broke her engagement, and bestowed them on another.

Now, Madam, abhor me, curse me, despise me, for I have probably lost you the most amiable of men ; one whom even the woman he hated, owned superior to the world ; but if I have not, pity, lament, and plead with your angel husband to forgive me. Tell him that when I sought to deprive him of the woman he worshipped, I inflicted on myself far greater pangs than it was possible I could on him ; they had every aggrava-



tion which a guilty conscience, a suspicious world, and an unfeeling mistress could bestow.

I am, &c. &c.

THEODORE."

What overpowering emotions did the perusal of this letter create in Agnes ! De Meurville, who suffering under the imputation of guilt had been dear to her, released from it, was once more adored ; and to see him, to tell him, what she had just heard, and acquaint him with the impressions under which she had acted, was now her desire ; but still how she should have been so deceived, seemed an enigma, and Agnes ran to look for the letters by which she had been so. There was certainly nothing in them, on the most profound scrutiny, and that they had often received before, to create her surprise that she should have believed them addressed to herself ; for, though they were cold, and latterly contemptuous, they were only what if she had become totally indifferent to him, and yet persecuted him with her letters, she might expect to receive ; the omission of her name in all of them, and that of any of her family, now certainly struck her as suspicious, and the hand-writing of the direction, which was always on an envelope, betrayed on close examination such a slight difference from his, as to justify the suspicion that it might be some one's else ; but still this did not argue that the letters were not intended for her ; and altogether Agnes found it more difficult to believe that they were not, than she had ever found it to persuade herself they were : love, however, induced the conviction which would render her most happy. And when she put every circumstance together—when she recollected the character of Annette, and how unreturned love might have produced hatred—when she considered the probability of her having quarrelled with her accomplice, and thus irritated him to a confession which he had no self-interest in revealing—and above all, when she recollected the dying looks of De Meurville, with the impressive language of his letter, and the melancholy tenderness of

his manner on the evening they were out together !—when she thought over all this, doubt dissipated, suspicion flew, and De Meurville appeared once more the perfect idol he had been, when first he received the homage of her young affections. But as a cloud will in a moment obscure a sunbeam, so did remembrance of the Duke of Westennera chill the joy of Agnes, and why she should rejoice at the Count's being restored to her affections, when another was destined for ever to possess herself, became the obtruding question of her conscience.

“For the credit of human nature,” replied her reason, but her heart whispered a very different tale, and for De Meurville, soliciting her love, imploring her hand, remembering the past but as enhancing the joys of the future, she felt she would that moment resign every thing ; leave her parents to rage, her lover to wonder, her friends to despise, and make him alone happy who had acted no such selfish part as they had, but suffered for her more, ah, how much more ! with whom while life was spared her, she could be equally happy in any place, in any country ; in Germany, in America, in England, in exile !

But what availed all this, if De Meurville was never to know it ? and there now seemed no probability of her seeing him again to acquaint him with her sentiments, for his Swiss valet whom she had met going down stairs, confirmed the information given in his master's letter ; namely, that the latter was very ill, and would be leaving Hermitage next morning. Was this to be borne, was De Meurville to leave her, and for ever ! under the conviction that she had acted a part the most contemptible ? No ; sooner than he should, she would go to him that moment, show him the letters she had received, and then leave him to judge if she merited condemnation ; and if she did not, would he, her De Meurville, be the first to pronounce it, or she his Agnes, the first from him to receive it. Her heart told her not ; and encouraged by its dictates, she approached the apartment of her lover ; and the door

being partly open, ventured to knock, but no answer was returned, and she knocked again. Still there was no answer; and thinking it most likely the Count was in an adjoining room, she ventured through to the opposite door; upon entering which the first object that met her eyes, was De Meurville, extended on a sofa, and apparently sleeping. Over the apartment in which the blinds were down, was diffused a mellow light, and through the windows, which opened to the garden, came the delicious fragrance of fruits and flowers.

Agnes trembled, and stood as if on fairy ground; upon one table lay a profusion of drawings done by the Count; on another, his books and music. Turning lightly over the pictures, Agnes was struck by one, representing a beautiful girl playing with a child; (the latter was evidently Adrian Balfour;) so lovely that Agnes blushed to believe it could be meant for herself, though the general outline of the features confirmed her in the idea that it was. And indeed among each of the groups, of which he had done several, was some figure evidently intended for hers; and which, whether it was enveloped in the cloak of a beggar girl, or adorned in gayer attire, had a face so bewitchingly sweet, as to throw every other into the shade.

Agnes wept while she beheld these testimonies of her lover's affection, and going over to the sofa, contemplated for a moment those beautiful features, to which sleep communicated a glow of health they had long ceased to wear when waking.

"De Meurville," said she, softly, and thinking it better to awaken him, as, if they did not take advantage of that period for an interview, no other might offer—"De Meurville," she again repeated, and evidently in that light uncertain slumber, which the slightest sound could dissipate, he turned, he sighed! and clasping the hand she had lightly laid on his, awoke. Either from not feeling, or from being too languid to express, De Meurville did not manifest that extreme surprise at the sight of Agnes which she had feared he would; but starting up, and taking her hand, with a melancholy smile, he

asked her if she were come to bid him farewell. Affected more by his looks and words than she had anticipated she would be, Agnes, unable to reply, turned aside and wept.

"My Agnes!" said he, the sight of her tears evidently surprising and distressing him, "wherefore is it that you weep?"

"Oh! call me not your Agnes," said she. "Call me not by a title to which I have lost all claim, and which it is now my misery to know the proudest I could have possessed."

"It might have been the happiest, Agnes," returned he; "and if it had depended upon me it should; but the one you are about to possess, is far prouder, and would consequently in the eyes of mankind be generally deemed far happier also."

"How inadequate to bring it so!" exclaimed Agnes, with a sigh. But she continued, as soon as her tears would permit her, "You think, De Meurville, you are addressing that vain, weak creature, whom an idea of the world's admiration could induce to forget her affection, her vows, her religion, and, for the obtaining of a paltry title, seek alliance with age, vice, and infirmity, when, instead of that, you see before you a wretched heart-broken girl, who, in the hope of your love, for awhile alone lived, and who, in the conviction, or as she conceived it conviction, of its falsity, nearly died; who, dragged by parental authority to the altar, sees in it only a readier passport to the grave."

"Ah! it has been as I foresaw," exclaimed the Count, with a sigh—"As I foretold to you, Agnes, it would, at our parting."

"No, it has not—it could not be, De Meurville," interrupted she with emotion; "or if you still conceive it has, after reading this letter, after seeing these in confirmation of it, I was never worthy of the regard with which you once honoured me."

"That you were once worthy, Agnes," said he, taking the letters, "of all, and more than I now could offer you, nothing I could learn would make me doubt,

but that you are still, it would be my delight as misery to know."

While De Meurville was reading these epistles, Agnes would have retired, but he gently detained her, and when he had finished that which explained the rest, caught her in his arms.

"Oh, unfortunate that I was!" said he, "to be entangled with that vile woman, to have been through her arts the means of destroying your happiness! Who could have conceived that the proposition I acceded to, to rid myself of her society, was invented to deprive me for ever of yours! Oh, Agnes! of what sorrow and of what misery has she not been to me the cause."

"To both you and me," said Agnes, weeping.

"But tell me, tell me!" he continued wildly, "whether all or any thing I could now do would atone to you for the past?"

"All that a mortal could do for me, De Meurville, you have already done," said Agnes, "and that under the suspicion of my being the most worthless of human creatures, it now rather rests with me to ask in what manner I am to recompense you for all that you have suffered for my sake."

"By giving me yourself!—by giving me yourself!" exclaimed he, "for that question makes me too happy for me to refute, as I feel I ought its justice. Forget, my Agnes, every other tie, and upon this night, this very night, renounce them all or my sake."

"You ask," said she, faintly, "what you only could obtain, and what, even to you, I hesitate to grant, from a conviction of the misery into which it would plunge my parents"

"Agnes!" said he, "if I were pleading for myself alone, I would not endeavour to seduce you from your duty; but I am pleading for you! and when I know the little happiness it is possible for you to enjoy with a man so dissimilar to yourself in age and dispositions as the Duke of Westenera, I feel that neither the disappointment which parental vanity may suffer, nor the desire his Grace may very probably entertain of having

such an angel flitting about his gouty pillow, are motives sufficient to deter me from making to you the offer at least, of what you have not now to learn, the acceptance would make me most blessed."

Agnes replied not by words, but her eyes met those of De Meurville, and reading it would seem acceptance there, he ventured to call her his own. As soon as she began to speak, however, she adjured him to look at the letters which she had received as coming from him; and De Meurville, in compliance with her wishes, did so; but they seemed rather to distract him, than to be in any way necessary as confirmation of the innocence of his Agnes; and at length tearing them in a thousand pieces he flung them from him. "So perish," said he, "all reminiscences of that wretched woman; but not so summary shall be her punishment."

"Ah, De Meurville!" exclaimed Agnes, "it may seem strange for me to be her intercessor, and with you; but when I know what I myself endured, under the supposition of having lost your love, that she should have made any attempts, however unlawful, to obtain or to regain you, I own I scarcely wonder."

"If it had been love that prompted her conduct, Agnes, perhaps I should not either; but it was not love, or any passion like it."

"Oh, yes! you do not know yourself," said she, "or you would believe it; and if she has not injured your health for ever, I conceive the punishment of having loved you and lost you, sufficient for her—sufficient for the misery of any creature who once might have entertained hopes of possessing you."

De Meurville smiled, and looked at Agnes: but of what exactly that look and smile implied, farther than a suspicion of his being dearer in her eyes than he was in those of others, none, perhaps, so well as she could tell.

"You talk of my health, my Agnes!" however at length he said, "as if you yourself enjoyed it, when that shadowy form, those pallid cheeks, those wasted arms which now entwine me, all tell so different a tale. Alas! my love! it was not once so."

"Nor will it be long," said she, caressingly. "These cheeks will be renovated with health, when it can be reflected from yours."

While Agnes spoke, De Meurville drew from her bosom a picture of himself, which a similarity in the chain she always wore about her neck to the one he had given her with his miniature, had often led him to suspect she still hung next her heart, and regarding it and her with pleased and gratified emotion, exclaimed, "To whom but the happy original of this image should fall the delightful task of restoring the health and happiness of Agnes?—not to the Duke of Westenera."

And as he spoke, their attention was arrested by the sound of voices in the garden, among others that of his Grace, who, apparently in high spirits, was talking and laughing alternately.

That intuitive delicacy, that native reserve, which powerful emotion may for a time suspend, but which an ensuing calm, or an awakening idea, always occasions to return with full force to the bosom of woman, again took possession of the heart of Agnes; and thinking she had already been guilty of an impropriety in remaining so long with De Meurville, she hastily arose, and, after making him promise to join them presently in the drawing-room, would have left him; but still he detained her; nor did they part till each had settled the line of conduct they were to pursue. De Meurville determined that evening to seek an interview with Sir William, confess the sentiments he had long entertained for Agnes, and then implore him as a father solicitous for his daughter's happiness, to pursue that course which would most contribute to it, and dissolve all engagements with the Duke of Westenera. This plan, though neither De Meurville nor Agnes adopted it upon the supposition of Sir William's acceding to their wishes, for that they knew, without Lady Mandeville's concurrence, would be out of the question, each thought it would be more proper to pursue than otherwise; and therefore it was finally agreed between them, that De Meurville should follow it, and,

before either retired to rest, acquaint Agnes with the result of his interview with her father.

If it proved favourable,—but that was not to be imagined;—if it proved unsuccessful, her lover implored her to make no hesitation in being married to him in the Castle chapel, where he would have Mr. Lewson, her brother's curate, who was then stopping at the house ready waiting to unite them; and then De Meurville would, according to his first intention, leave Hermitage early in the morning; but instead of for London, for a town a few miles off, from which in the evening he would take a carriage and horses, and be ready waiting in a by-road near Hermitage, to convey her off from the latter.

It was not without many sighs and tears that Agnes contemplated the fulfilment of this scheme; for she was the best of daughters, as well as the most beloved of mistresses; and though her mother had shown herself unkind in her conduct towards her, and that she could sacrifice her child's happiness for the gratification of her own ambitious views, and though her father had proved himself weak in making no opposition to his wife's manœuvres, she could not forget that they were still her parents; and that neither her dislike of the Duke of Westennera, nor adoration of the Count de Meurville, altogether justified her leaving them in the manner she intended. But what was to be done, and which was most calculated to soften and overcome her resolution? De Meurville, pleading, imploring, hanging on her words, with health, spirits, peace, all gone, but as they might be restored by her love; or her parents, to whom in misery she had prayed unpitied, to whom in tears she had appealed unheeded, to whom in frenzy she had knelt in vain.—Alas! her heart said “He,” but Nature whispered “They.”



## CHAPTER XII.

I'd mourn the hopes that leave me,  
 If thy smiles had left me too ;  
 I'd weep when friends deceive me,  
 If thou wert like them untrue ;  
 But while I've thee before me,  
 With heart so warm, and eyes so bright ;  
 No clouds can linger o'er me,  
 That smile turns them all to light ;  
 'Tis not in fate to harm me,  
 While fate still leaves my love to me ;  
 'Tis not in joy to charm me,  
 Unless that joy be shar'd with thee.—MOORE.

THAT love would prove triumphant over duty, was probably the natural anticipation of our readers, how it did so, and what immediate happiness was the result, we shall leave Agnes Mandeville herself to describe in a letter to Catharine Morton, written a few weeks after her elopement, following one in which she had informed her of the reconciliation that had taken place between herself and her lover :

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

I AM the most happy, the most blessed of women ! Life has become as delightful to me, as one short month ago it was hateful, and to my enraptured fancy, every object is bright, every creature beautiful ; with De Meurville by my side, this gloomy castle is lovely as a fairy palace ! this ungenial climate, a perpetual Eden, and even my mother-in-law and sisters—who treat me with the most mortifying hauteur—charming as the fabled hours of Paradise ! I feel like a criminal escaped from condemnation ! like a prisoner relieved of his chains ! like a bird emancipated from its captivity ! But happy as I am, De Meurville tells me, I am not half so happy as he ! and if the thing were possible, I should believe him, so much more than *me* is he improved in looks and health ; but it is not, for I can never be to him all that he is to me, which is surely more than ever man was yet to

woman. His tenderness, his gentleness, his thoughtfulness, his anticipation of my wants, exceeds any thing you could think it possible to meet with in *his* sex, scarcely in the most amiable of our own ; but it is reserved for my beloved to unite the fascinations of both, and when I behold him so manly, so noble, so spirited by nature, so superior to men in general, and so proud among them ; gentle with me, submissive to my slightest wish, miserable when he fancies he has displeased me, and grateful and delighted at my most trifling attentions, I blush at my own unworthiness to possess such influence, and often, throwing myself into his arms, implore heaven to make me better—or De Meurville to love me less ; for I cannot sustain such a weight of gratitude as this excess of unmerited affection occasions me to feel. But I am forgetting that I promised, in my last letter, to give you a detailed account of all that should ensue from the period at which I concluded it, and which was, I believe, when, after our interview, I left De Meurville. Well, he went that evening to my father, and when every one had retired to their rooms, came to tell me the result of their conference. Expecting him to do so, I had not begun undressing, and my room being at the end of a detached gallery, we stood talking at the door of it without fear of being heard ; when, as we were thus engaged, and De Meurville telling me, “that though my father’s wishes evidently favoured our designs, his fear of my mother would prevent him taking any step in the matter, and that if we did, it must be without his apparent knowledge,” we heard a door open, and presently steps and voices approaching. Imagine my terror, and how I looked at De Meurville, who, like his provoking sex—only began to laugh at my distress.

“What, for heaven’s sake ! shall we do ?” said I, as the steps approached, “you cannot go back to your room !” No ! you must take me to yours,” said he, and as he spoke, he put me and himself in, and locked the door. “Now are you at rest,” said he, and he put his hand on my beating heart. “Heavens ! De Meur-

ville," I returned, "it is my mother, I know her voice; what will she say!" and as I spoke I ran to a door in my room, which I know leads by long winding passages to some part of the grounds, but the lock had grown so rusty from disuse, that neither de Meurville nor I could turn it, nor indeed had we long to try, for at that moment my mother called to me for admittance. Conceive my situation; I gave myself up for lost, but De Meurville, who had throughout been more amused than alarmed, fortunately struck out a method, though far from an infallible one, of concealing himself, and laying down on a sofa which was at a distant corner of the room, made me cover him with cloaks and shawls, of which there was a great multiplicity. Trembling like an aspen leaf, I then went to open the door, and as one deception ever leads to another, was obliged to intimate I had been dosing, to account for my mother's frequent calls of my name having been unheeded. "Why, child, you are as pale as a ghost," said she; "is any thing the matter!" "Oh no," returned I faintly, "I was only a little startled;" and my mother was so full of what she came about, that she scarcely heeded my answer.

"Well, my love," said she, "I couldn't resist the pleasure of coming to show you these nice things, which arrived by the coach to-night, and which Mr. Hickmond very obligingly sent over. See here! Terrance put down the box. The bonnet, you see, my love, the very thing we wished for, just like lady Ellendale's!" and for a moment she shadowed with its drooping Chantilly my ghastly countenance, but snatching it off rather impatiently, "Oh! you're such a fright, Agnes, of late; you'd spoil any thing! positively you must die yourself with carmine on Thursday," alluding to its being my wedding-day, "or in your beautiful white satin you'll look more like a corpse than a bride!"

"Ah!" thought I, while a pang smote my bosom, "of how little consequence will it be to you in what manner I look on that day!"

But regardless of the faint interest I expressed, my

deluded parent continued : " See here, my love, isn't this spencer the prettiest thing ? and the clasps just like those on your pelisse. And then this shawl, to throw over a morning dress, is the very one I should have selected. Isn't it beautiful ?"

Thus my mother went on till she had exhausted the contents of the box, in which was contained all the last additions to my bridal finery, and of which, while my mother was lost in contemplation of the beauty, I was lost in contemplation of the uselessness, and wishing, with all my heart, that the Duke of Westennera, would transfer his hand to Arabella, and array her in the grandeur, which, as his wife, could never make her sister happy. When my mother had terminated her raptures, I had hoped she would terminate her visit, but I was yet to be kept longer on the rack ; and leaving Terrance to put up the things, she began : " How wretchedly De Meurville looks, Agnes ! Really, when he came to wish me good bye to-night, I felt as if it were an eternal farewell I were giving him."

" God forbid !" involuntarily exclaimed I.

" But if he were not very ill," continued my mother, " you may be sure he'd stay for your wedding ; for he was not wont to be so averse to gayety."

" No," returned I, " but that," I unconsciously added, " would be no gayety for *him*."

" Why not ?" demanded my mother, surprised ; and for a moment—but 'twas but for a moment, she looked, I fancied, suspicious.

" O !" returned I, hesitatingly, " it would——"

" Ah !" interrupted my mother, anticipating what I had not thought of, " you think it would remind him of his less happy destiny. By the by," added she, and at that moment was seized with a propensity to fidget about the room, which filled me with unspeakable horror : " by the by, Agnes, did you ever hear him talk lately about Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe."

" No—yes," said I ; and at that moment, between something of a scream and an exclamation, I arrested

her seizure of a cloak, which, lying over the feet of De Meurville, she was actually about to take up.

"In the name of heaven! what's the matter?" said she, breaking off short in a pathetic lamentation she was beginning over "poor dear Maddy's scarlet cloak!"—"Are you mad, child?" and Terrance, amazed, inquired if I was ill.

"No, no," said I, regaining breath as my mother retreated from the sofa.

"Then what, for mercy's sake, 's the matter?" cried the latter, somewhat angrily, "you frightened me out of my senses!" and as my mother spoke, she sat down, declaring she was quite flustered.—"Why, Agnes, you seem wild to-night: what! in the name of all that's wonderful, is come to you?"

"I thought I heard a noise down stairs," said I, wishing to direct her attention any where, every where, but to one spot.

"Nonsense!" she replied, "why will you be so foolish?" but at that moment, and most opportunely, some stir in the house justified my observation; and in opening the door to listen, and reproving the delinquent, who was one of the house-maids, for being up so late, a sensation was created, which diverted her attention from me, and prevented any further allusion to the red cloak. Presently my mother took her leave, and only imagine what a relief it was to me! I flew over to De Meurville, who, I was afraid, must be nearly smothered; and, after releasing him from his confinement, asked him if he had not been frightened out of his senses.

"On your account, my Agnes, I was," said he; and indeed he looked so ill, that I was quite uneasy, and wanted him to retire to rest directly, but he wouldn't hear of it—and told me he never felt better: "You forget, my Agnes," said he, "that the time is come, in which your consent alone is wanting, for the solemnization of those rites which will render you mine for ever; and think you that any thing but joy can affect me in this hallowed hour? ah! Agnes, no."

"And yet will this hour," said I, "be but the epoch

from which to date others of greater happiness, when neither fear nor anxiety shall cloud our enjoyment of each other's society."

"When," cried he, embracing me, "we never more shall part!"

But without troubling you with such detail, or any more intermediate circumstances, it will suffice to say, we were married that night in the castle chapel, which we reached, finding it the shortest and most convenient way, through the passage I alluded to before, leading out of my room. And De Meurville left Hermitage next morning, after having previously settled with me as to the steps we should take in the evening.

Some have observed,—Dr. Johnson for one—that we never do any thing for the last time without regret! And what overwhelming emotion I felt when the hour arrived, in which I was for the last time to see my parents, you may form an idea. Like a perturbed spirit, I wandered about the room in which every one else was gay and happy; and at last, gliding up to the table where my mother was playing cards, I sat on a chair at the back of hers, leaning my head on my hand. "What is the matter, Agnes!" said the Duke of Westenera, "you look very pale!"

"I don't know; I am ill," returned I; "I believe I must retire." And as I spoke, my mother turned quickly round: "You look very unwell Agnes," she said, "and had better withdraw, for illness and you must have nothing to do with each other to-morrow you know."

"To-morrow!" repeated the Duke, and smiling he pressed my hand, but it was no moment with me in which to return his smile; and bursting into tears, I hid my face on the neck of my mother.

"What means this agitation, Agnes?" she inquired, and probably, from not wishing his Grace to behold it, she arose hastily, and hurried with me into the next room, where was sitting my father. "Tell me, Agnes," she said, shutting the door, "what mean these tears? these agitations? these perpetual illnesses of yours: to

what am I to impute them? for I really cannot tell! I thought your extreme aversion to his Grace was overcome; and that you anticipated your marriage—if not with the delight one might expect, at least with a satisfaction one could not complain of; but, instead of that, the time approaches, and you appear little better than a maniac! For ever in tears! I cannot look at, much less speak to you, without producing a flood. What does all this mean? tell me, Agnes; in presence of your father, tell me.”

“It means, it means,” said I, as soon as I could speak, “that I am wretched;—and why you should wonder at my being so, when you have made me so, I cannot tell!”

“Ungrateful girl!” interrupted my mother; “Listen to her,” she said, addressing my father, “listen to the thanks I receive for my solicitude to secure her happiness: but know, Agnes, that from the moment you become the Duke of Westennera’s wife, which—please heaven—you will do ere this to-morrow, I renounce all trouble respecting you, for I am weary of you. Your perpetual discontents, exceed even my power of forbearance. And to be a galley-slave, or a miner, or any thing else, I should now consider a less laborious duty, than for a week longer to attend on the whims and caprices of Miss Mandeville.”

“You have spoken well,” involuntarily exclaimed I, “for you have dissipated all remaining scruples; and never, never more, shall you be troubled with my caprices: he perhaps will bear them, who with myself must wed them; and, if he does not, they, with me must die.”

Supposing of course that it was to the Duke of Westennera I alluded, my mother was softened; and observing, “that though her words were harsh, she did not mean them unkind, and that if they had brought me to reason, she could not repent them,” she extended her hand to mine, which you may be sure embraced it.

“Let not this night,” said I, “the last night which I shall for so long a time spend here, be embittered by

any recollections of unkindness from you, but forgive any I may ever have shown, and then endeavour to forget it." With this entreaty I also turned to my father, and after embracing both, left them, perhaps for ever, but of course under the idea that it was only till next morning.

On my way to my room I met Arabella, to whom I wished good night, and I believe with a seriousness that surprised her, for returning after she had left me, she said, "Is any thing the matter, Agnes?" "No," returned I carelessly, and taking from her a book, which, it would seem, by instinct I knew to be De Meurville's, asked her where she found it.

"In Clifford's room," returned she, "and I was bringing it down that we might recollect to send it to him."

"What is it called?"

"She didn't know." Only conceive how little curiosity. "Ah, I wouldn't have changed with Arabella, though she was light of heart, and I was not, but with whom would I have changed places? Not with any one in this world!" and so I couldn't help thinking as she followed me into my room, and began talking to me about De Meurville.

"I have sometimes thought, Agnes," said she, after a pause, "that you loved Clifford!"

"I don't think any one could know him without loving him," returned I.

"Ah, but with something more than common love," said she, "and that he loves you."

"Why should you think so?" inquired I.

"Oh, I have seen him look at you," said she, "and sometimes you at him, as if you were thinking of one another."

"Not latterly I am sure," said I, "not since he has been here this last time."

"No, not so much," said she; "but when he was here before, then he never smiled, but he raised his eyes on you; and if you smiled also, he looked pleased and happy."

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"Why will you treasure up such foolish remembrances?" said I. "And I recollect also," continued she, "when we were in London, going into the drawing-room one day before dinner, and he was standing, as well as I could see, for it was quite dusk, with his arms round your waist, but you looked as if you had been crying, and would'nt listen to what he was saying to you. Don't you recollect it, Agnes?"

In truth I did, though I didn't say so to her. He had been speaking rather unkindly about something which displeased him in my conduct the night preceding, and just before she entered was entreating my forgiveness for it, which, whatever she might fancy, I was not refusing him. How could I, when lips so dear solicited it.

As soon as Arabella left me, which she presently did, I sat down, and according to the usual custom of young ladies on such occasions, wrote a few lines to my mother, which were as follows :

"You will not wonder at the step I have taken, though you may be indignant ; you will excuse my conduct when you recollect my provocation ; and, oh, may I hope it, you will perhaps forgive Agnes Mandeville when you learn that by indissoluble ties she is now  
"AGNES DE MEURVILLE."

Short enough, will my Catharine say, and so it was, but I knew whatever I wrote would in the first moment of irritation be indignantly discarded ; and therefore thought it better to reserve any more eloquent appeal, for some time in which it would stand greater chance of being appreciated ; when reason, resuming its empire, would fairly compare the Duke of Westennera with the Count De Meurville. and own that the woman, happy enough to have obtained the affections of the latter, would never be infatuated enough to unite herself to the former, when better appreciation of the virtues of my beloved, should induce them to overlook the fond folly of his wife.

As soon as I had written this, I looked at my watch,

and finding the time was come, in which I might every minute be expecting to depart—I locked my door to prevent, till the latest moment possible, a discovery being made of my absence; and left together, with obvious arrangement, the bridal clothes that had been prepared for me, for I determined that nothing intended to adorn the bride of the Duke of Westennera, should profane the form of the Countess De Meurville. Soon the summons I expected came, and De Meurville himself was the bearer of it. With delighted love he threw his arms around me—implored me fearlessly to follow him; and swore that, through life, it should be his happy lot to guide and protect me. I took his offered hand, and encircled by his arms, we together penetrated the long passage, through which he had just come, and in a few minutes reached a deserted part of the park, at the end of which was waiting the carriage, without any other attendant than the driver; De Meurville having purposely avoided bringing any servant of his own, aware of the humiliating sense of equality such participation in error ever produces.

The night, which had hitherto been a fine moon-light, began, a short time after we had proceeded on our road, wonderfully to change; and before two hours had elapsed, so frightfully did it blow and rain, as to fill my mind with the most gloomy presages. Not even the smiles of De Meurville, though they beamed consolation, could dissipate them; and it required all my efforts to prevent his perceiving my spirits cast down, which I did not wish he should do, for I was still with him: and it was paying him a poor compliment to suppose that, enjoying that happiness, any thing under heaven, but misfortune, could disturb my peace.

We talked of his family, of his mother—how feelingly did he regret that she was not worthy to be mine.

“Ah! my love,” cried I, “it is sufficient that she is yours, to render her dear to me; and your Agnes will be the last to find failings in any happy enough to be, by nature, connected with you.”

“But, Agnes,” said he, “shall in her husband find

atonement for every deficiency in others. If friends are unkind, it will but make him more fond. If relations are unjust, it is De Meurville, and not his wife, they will make their bitterest foe ; and if the most devoted love man ever felt, or paid, towards woman, can avert her slightest sorrow—she shall never know it !”

The storm, which had been gradually increasing, now rose to such a height, accompanied with thunder and lightning, that the driver declared it impossible to proceed ; and, being a civil man, proposed dismounting, and seeing if there were any house in the neighbourhood at which he could stop for the night. Having no fear from pursuit, which, if it did, could not commence till ten or eleven next morning, when my absence might perhaps be discovered, De Meurville and I consented to this—and most fortunately found ourselves stopping near a superior sort of farm-house, where they were in the habit of letting a room to any stranger. Into this house we were presently ushered ; and the comfortable appearance of the inmates, who were collected around a large fire, made it appear an actual heaven after our exposure to the elements without. Wrapped in my cloak, as I stood warming my feet, I had an opportunity of surveying those around me : they composed a group of at once the plainest and most good-humoured faces I ever saw in my life. There was an elderly couple—he had been reading aloud from Robinson Crusoe ; she had been knitting—which, at my entrance, she discontinued, till I begged her to resume. Then there were two middle-aged women, I presume their daughters, preparing supper ; and three young men engaged in mending fishing nets, or something of the kind. Besides these, and the only exception to a general appearance of kindness and good will, was a crabbed old dame, half asleep and half awake ; but enough the latter to view me with a very malignant expression ; about whom, in truth, De Meurville was making more fuss than an object so unworthy deserved ; nor could I prevail on him to be quiet, till I had consented to take some refreshment. Previous to which

and while it was preparing, I went to look at the room they proposed for my sleeping in ; and which, like the one I had left adjoining it, was most comfortable.

During the night the storm continued, but the morning rose beautiful as we could desire ; and, after breakfasting, we proceeded, thinking it altogether the best plan, by a coach which happened to pass that way. In it, were two old acquaintances, the only inside passengers, a gentleman and his daughter ; the former an agreeable kind of man, the latter dull and reserved enough ; looking upon me, I suspect, as in a more agreeable situation with a husband who spoiled me, than she with a father, who perpetually contradicted her ; and whose protection, I know, she has made many unsuccessful attempts to free herself from, by marriage, unaware that the latter may entail miseries, in comparison with which other annoyances are as nothing. But is it the beloved wife of De Meurville who finds herself writing thus ? Ah ! let me check my pen, and, more particularly, as the most adored of men is near me. He asks me what I am writing about ? What shall I say ? Shall I say I am writing to the dearest of friends, about the most amiable of husbands ? No : I will not flatter his vanity so far ; and I hope it's out of my power to increase your conviction of my affection. Surely it must be ! But to return to my story : we reached London that afternoon, and De Meurville and I were sitting down to a tête-à-tête dinner, when it was disagreeably transformed into a trio, by the entrance of a gentleman, who had recognised De Meurville at the window of the hotel, and wished to converse with him on business ; disagreeably, I say, but, as it turned out, I was not sorry, for it gave me an opportunity of going out, unknown to the latter, after dinner.

Too soon, you will say, to run off from my husband ; but the fact was, I wanted to see the Dainers, and not being quite certain of the reception I might meet with, did not wish to expose De Meurville to the possibility of an affront. I was mistaken, however, in supposing

any necessity for such precaution; they flew to me with open arms, and Charles declared that were it his own daughter, or sister, who had acted as I had done, under similar circumstances, he could not have blamed her.

"I almost died," said I, "in my efforts to obey my parents; but surely it was a more pleasing prospect to live in the enjoyment of De Meurville's love."

"Oh, infinitely more!" returned Caroline, and she smiled.

"But why," said Charles, "should we not go and see this dear De Meurville, more especially, as your leaving town to-night is, you say, a settled thing?"

"Yes, come!" cried I, "he will be delighted to see you, and your company will render this night, the last perhaps which we shall for years spend in England, the oftenest referred to, the most fondly prized."

In short, they accompanied me back to the hotel, and I ushered them into the drawing-room, where was still sitting De Meurville and his friend; indeed it was but a quarter of an hour since I had left them, or the former would certainly have been in pursuit of me, for he is never happy when I am out of his sight. If he delights so much in me, with how much more reason may I, in him, for he is more perfect than ever his Agnes can be. The Damers spent the evening with us, and never did evening pass more agreeably. At parting, all of us were somewhat affected, particularly Caroline and myself; while she wished me every happiness in this world, she more feelingly prayed for my exemption from its sorrows.

"Oh never fear!" cried Charles, "she has De Meurville to share its sorrows with her."

"Rather may he ever participate in its joys," said I; and when the Damers took leave, which, after reiterated good wishes, they presently did, I turned to embrace the dear source of all my future hopes, who looked—as he ever does, on this side heaven—their brightest pledge.

We left London that night for Dover, from which we sailed the next evening for Calais, and thence proceeded, without delay, to Paris, where it was necessary De Meurville should remain a day or two. While there we stopped at the hotel D'Angleterre, the very hotel in which, more than three years ago, I first met De Meurville. Well I recollected the evening, as if it were this ; I was alone, for every one had gone out except myself and Madame de Blancheau, our French governess, who had retired to her room with a toothache.—In person, De Meurville was just what he is now, interesting rather than handsome, elegant rather than striking, fascinating more from the graces of nature than from any adventitious acquirement of manner, though he has the latter in an eminent degree ; we talked, I recollect, of every subject under heaven, and often have I wondered since, when—in tête-à-tête with him—my powers of conversation have deserted me, where I found them then ; but it was love, I now suppose, first taught me bashfulness, nor does it still allow me that self-possession I ought perhaps to have ; like a silly timid girl, I blush and tremble whenever my husband caresses me, and yield to his embraces—but to hide myself from his eyes ! What De Meurville must think of my folly I know not ; better can I tell his kind consideration for it, and he will steal my hand, and glide his arm around my waist, before his foolish Agnes has time to blush about it. But then he smiles with cruel exultation, and over whom is it that he thus triumphs ? Over her so willing to own his power ; so unable, as experience has proved, to resist it.

From the time I left Paris, my imagination was, as you may fancy, perpetually employed in forming suppositions with respect to those I was about to meet. How brilliant they were, how completely disappointed, I have not now time to tell you. Suffice it to say, that every thing but the appearance of grandeur and magnificence fell short of my expectation. De Meurville's sisters, or rather his sister's in-law—for his only sister has taken the veil—are fine showy women, and his mo-

ther ! oh how unlike what I had fancied ! De Meurville's mother is a coarse, fat-looking woman—thinking her son, as well she may, the most superior of human beings.

Besides these, the inmates of this gloomy tapestry-hung castle, about which I am afraid to walk by myself, are very numerous. Antiquated uncles, aunts, and cousins, form the larger share. Among them all, dressed up as they are, like the figures in old pictures, I, in my simple English costume, cut a very inconsequential figure ; but while I appear pleasing in De Meurville's eyes, it is of very little moment to me what I appear in those of others, and he is never tired of telling me that I do. Indeed, he is never tired of saying to me all that is kind and consolatory ; and to give you an idea how much I love him, would be as impossible as to tell you how much he deserves that I should. Suppose I now bid you adieu, and under the most anxious expectation of hearing from you, remain, as ever, yours affectionately,

AGNES DE MEURVILLE.

P. S. I see by the English papers, which all announce my elopement in the phraseology appropriate to such occasions, that the Duke of Westennera married the day week of its taking place ; Heaven grant his bride more happiness than I can form an idea of any woman's enjoying with him ! By the bye—and last not least, though like a true woman, I omitted mentioning it till now—my mother wrote me a very severe letter soon after my arival here. It was filled with such upbraidings and reproaches, as literally made me cry myself sick ; which when De Meurville discovered, he was like a distracted man that I should have seen it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"Not showers to larks so pleasing,  
Not sunshine to the bee,  
Not rest from toil so easing,  
As those sweet smiles to me."

*From the Count de Meurville to the Baron de Roncevalles.*

You are kind enough to express so earnest a wish of hearing from me after my arrival here, that though completely divided between my duties as a husband and a courtier, I must find a few minutes to write to you. With the Countess de Meurville I reached this place on Thursday last, and am happy to say, my fair transplanted flower bore the journey as well as I could expect, and gives promise of soon looking again as beautiful as she once did in her native country. Oh! De Roncevalles, what a journey it was! How happy to your friend, and, if I may believe her gentle looks, not less so to his wife! To be for the first time intrusted with the care of the woman one loves, to enjoy hours and days in her society, when moments alone had once made us content, is a luxuriance of bliss, an excess of joy, that he must be something more or less than man, who did not appreciate. For me, I felt transported somewhere above the seventh heaven, and fear my bride could only judge of the elevation of my mind by the stupidity of my manners. If she spoke, my admiring eyes confused her; if I did myself, 'twas nonsense that I said, and she could plainly read the cause. In short, my absence and my attentions, both equally awkward, would, I was at last afraid, alienate the affections of my Agnes,

"And love itself undo what love had done!"



But, like an angel, she forgave me all my folly, and I told her, her doing so was a happy presage for one who would have so many claims to make upon her forbearance.

You desire me, De Roncevalles, to describe my Agnes, not only for your benefit, but the Baroness; who has, you say, expressed a conviction that she never shall be jealous till she sees the Countess de Meurville! What an opinion must she have of my taste, if she conceives me alone able to select a woman capable of exciting such a sentiment! but not a greater than I must have of hers, from the circumstance of her having chosen you.

In person, then, my Agnes is rather tall, but so slender as to convey an impression of frailty and delicacy, which her manners and expression sweetly confirm; not that the former are inanimate, or the latter languid, but so blended with gentleness and feminine timidity, as to give an idea of a creature, formed to look up to others for support, and accustomed to be cherished with the fondest care. In Agnes there is nothing of the off-hand, the showy, the dashing, but all that you can conceive of the gentle, the feminine, the retiring, the sweet: were I to describe her by the impressions I feel she would make on you, even from a single glance, I should say you would pronounce her lovely, intellectual, sweet-tempered, beloved! one formed,

“The softest raptures to impart,  
To feel the most refin’d.”

If by the sentiments a farther acquaintance would produce, so endearing and bewitching, as though no heart so well as my own can feel, no lips, for that very reason, can so ill express. Her eyes are of the deepest blue; and her colour of the faintest carmine, with a mouth, which though I know you will think me running into the usual rhapsody of a lover, is so like a rosebud, that I can compare it to nothing else. In the meantime, as I trust the period is not very far distant

when you will yourself be welcomed by this beautiful mouth, and see

*"Those eyes in liquid circles moving,  
That cheek abash'd at man's approving,"*

I shall not farther dwell upon their attractions, but, leaving you to judge whether I have exaggerated them, remain, in the meantime, with kind regards to the Baroness, and love to your charming children,

Yours, very truly,

C. DE MEURVILLE.

The elopement of Agnes did not altogether excite that sensation which might have been expected, or that degree of indignation and surprise which alone could have pacified Lady Mandeville, whose own rage on the occasion literally scared that of others. With the exception of the Duke of Westennera, in whose bosom, surprise at her folly exceeded every other sentiment, pity was the prevailing feeling; and that a lovely girl like Miss Mandeville, dying as she to all appearance was, should be reduced to such a step, reflected more disgrace on the parents than the child. But pity and rage were alike unavailing, she was De Meurville's, De Meurville's for ever! and no one seemed willing to step forward and dispute his claim. Some from indolence, some from feeling; Sir William beheld, in secret and unsuspected delight, the emancipation of his child; Sydney and Clermont swore it was only what their mother might expect; and even the Duke, in his moments of sanity, professed himself never to have expected such fortune as the possession of so sweet a creature would have proved.

But Lady Mandeville was like a distracted woman; and at once unfortunate for her gratification, and fortunate for their lives was it, that none in the house were accessary to the elopement; it would certainly have occasioned their destruction.

Mr. Lewson was the only person in the least implicated, and he escaped all suspicion, from being supposed

far distant on the night in which he in reality married them.

Anticipating the lapse of six months, which ensuing this event were passed in dull uniformity, we must introduce our readers to one of greater importance, by which Lady Mandeville became a widow, and her eldest son heir to all his father's honours; namely, the death of Sir William. This blow, long expected, from the declining health of the Baronet, had been hastened by untimely information of the sad end of Charlotte, over whose marriage, from the period of her misconduct, he had lamented with a bitterness, which his unfeeling wife had never known: indeed in the guilt of a child, there is something to rouse the most lethargic nature, and the parent who can behold it with unconcern, is one who would have connived at it with indifference.

The death of Sir William left Lady Mandeville, dependent on her son for any benefits exclusive of the payment of her jointure; and that these would include, allowing her to remain at Hermitage, her carriage, &c. she had little doubt. On this head, however, Sydney, now Sir Sydney Mandeville, seemed to entertain a different opinion, and while the Baronet thought that permitting his mother to live with him till his marriage was doing her a favour, she conceived that residing with him ever after would be conferring on him an honour. The fact was, Lady Mandeville was not fully aware of the involved state in which Sir William had left his affairs, and supposed things would go on as they had hitherto done. But that they never could again, except under the regulation of a more parsimonious hand than hers, Sydney was perfectly aware, and therefore determined to look for a wife possessing qualities he had long ago perceived deficient in a mother: till however he succeeded in selecting one to his taste, her ladyship was welcome to remain at Hermitage, and nothing but the surrounding sables should remind her that she had lost a husband. This was surely as much as such a mother as Lady Mandeville, had a right to expect, but not so much, it seems, as she did; and highly indignant

that her son should propose appointing another mistress in that house, over which she, for more than thirty years, had reigned undisputed queen, her ladyship determined on quitting Hermitage immediately, and with her two daughters, Arabella and Rhoda, settling in London. This step, prompted first by pique, was finally hastened by necessity; for the commencement of a disorder, long suspected, was now declared certain, and no place but in the vicinity of medical advice, proper for her ladyship. How such a communication affected one violent in her passions and unaccustomed to restraint, imagination may picture, though words cannot describe. It roused every bad feeling of her nature, and angry with all around, as if they had been her enemies, it transformed in her eyes the world she had worshipped, into a scene of misery and woe.

About the two remaining Miss Mandevilles it now became a question what to do; neither had fortune, nor had either talents. Their education having been totally neglected, under the mistaken idea, that money was better expended on those of the family who, favoured by nature, would be likely to form alliances beneficial to the rest. That this had been most mistaken policy, the total inadequacy of any one of the sisters who had married, to protect those who had not, now proved. Among them, Mrs. Balfour was the only one in the least likely; and she, a woman of the world, surrounded with a large family, and married to a man profuse in his own expenses alone, had not the inclination: besides the Balfours were in Italy. To the Countess of Ossulton there had been several letters written; but a few lines from the Earl, and that after great delay, was the only token of their having been received. His Lordship's epistle contained a request that all correspondence might cease; the health of the Countess being too delicate to admit of her keeping it up. Besides this, there was a mortifying hint at the disgraceful conduct of Mrs. Russel, and elopement of Agnes: his Lordship said that close intimacy with a family, in which most unpleasant events had taken

place, was to be avoided, though connexion with it was now irretrievable. For the De Meurvilles, they were exempted by circumstances, from any such unpleasant entailments as poor relations. And of the three young men, Sydney, Clermont, and Adrian, the latter was with his regiment in America, the second indolent and selfish, pursuing his own interests in the church ; and the Baronet, daily making discoveries of debts and incumbrances, which little inclined him to exercise charity towards his sisters. So that the two Miss Mandevilles, notwithstanding the grandeur with which they were connected, had, for a time at least, to remain in obscurity with their mother, her limited jointure not permitting her residence in any gay part of London, and indeed the state of her health being such as to render that circumstance immaterial. Strange vicissitudes altogether in a family which had once excited envy, admiration, and wonder, but only a commencement of those which were to precede its final extinction ; and a proof how little the tinsel of this world, its pomps and its vanities, can avert or ameliorate those melancholy hours, in which remembrance will be hateful, and conscience tormenting ; in which repentance must be resorted to, or we will be commensurate with eternity.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

"Thy words, whate'er their flattering spell,  
Could ne'er have thus deceived ;  
But eyes which acted truths so well,  
Were sure to be believed."

THE sun of Glenallan was rising, as that of Mandeville was sinking, in the ascendancy, and the bright rays of the former served but to contrast the setting light of the latter. The families of Malverton and Mandeville

had so long been coupled together, that when nothing was heard of but the greatness of the one, and the names of Glenallan and Malverton, celebrated in India and in Britain, the world began to look around, and ask what had become of their compeers, why their triumphs were at an end, while those of the other were daily increasing and reverberating from the Indian to the German ocean. The answer was comprehended in the decease of Sir William; that had proved the death-blow to all their greatness, and the Baronet, who had been overlooked when living, was almost deified when dead. People began to discover that he had been the best of the family, and that, under his apparent dulness and brusquerie of manner, he had concealed much warmth and friendliness of disposition, while with the rest all was folly, pride, and pretension. Lady Mandeville, vain and silly, had brought up her daughters with no better ambition than that of forming good marriages, and though she had to a degree succeeded, it was with something very like satisfaction the world saw how much she had been disappointed in the consequences she had expected would result from them; and whether her eyes were turned on Mrs. Balfour, Lady Ossulton, or the Countess de Meurville, there was not one but served to furnish some source of regret, and a melancholy comparison of what they were, with what they might have been, as regarded the benefit to herself. From neither could her ladyship now derive any consequence, and winter, which had so often been the scene of her gayety and theirs, was now passed, by the former at least, in melancholy obscurity and unavailing regrets, in looking on with envy at those who yet continued to float on the ocean of popularity, and in not unfrequently overhearing commiseration of her own unhappy fate. Never more unguardedly and more mortifyingly did she hear the latter discussed, than one morning when with the strange fatality which sometimes leads us to our fate, she had gone into a fashionable dressmaker's; sitting there, her ladyship was looking over some silks, when a splendid carriage stopped before the door, and two ladies

prepared to alight. Expecting they would do so, Lady Mandeville requested permission to retire into an adjoining room, not wishing, as she said, to encounter any strangers, but, in reality, much more fearful of encountering some acquaintances, who would cut her, or recognise her with mortifying contempt. Indifferent as to her motives, and mistaking her ladyship for some person whom it would have been of more consequence to oblige, Madame Frumeau consented, and Lady Mandeville was hurried into one room as the two ladies were ushering into the other. Through a window in the door, she contrived to view them, and so elegant and superior were both, that it required but a glance to determine who they were. The first was Lady Glenallan, the next was Lady Isabella Ireton, or rather Lady Isabella Wandesmere, for by that name, and as a wife, must she now be introduced to our readers.

"Well, have you any thing pretty, Madame Frumeau," said the Marchioness, seating herself, and taking up, as she spoke, a beautiful cap.

"Oh, I have ten thousand things, my Lady," cried the Frenchwoman, placing a chair for Lady Isabella, "and all just arrived from the continent; the cap de Venice, the Florentine bonnet, the pelisse D'Espagnol, the manteau de Berri, the pillerine à la Russe."

"Well, let's see something," interrupted Lady Glenallan, "we knew this much by your advertisement."

"Here, Mademoiselle D'Estrees, allons Signora Barili! display for my Lady Glenallan les bonnets, les caps d'Italie, les robes de Suisse, la pelisse D'Espagnol, les ribbons, les coiffures, les fleurs de France;" and, obedient to her orders, the table was in a few minutes covered with such beautiful articles as might have dazzled eyes less experienced than those of the Marchioness and her friend. But to them nothing was new, and the things were tossed over by both with the same air of indifference and dissatisfaction.

"Have you any thing made up in lace?" at length inquired the Marchioness; "I don't want silk dresses."

"Alas, my lady, at this present moment I have not,"

returned the Frenchwoman; "but I have the most elegant dresses in satin, in velvet, in India muslin, which if your ladyship would but look at—"

"Show me a velvet," said the Marchioness, and a beautiful amber was exhibited for her ladyship's inspection.

"Oh, I would not wear that," cried Lady Isabel, with a laugh, "if I had no other in the world!"

Lady Glenallan looked interrogation.

"Can you doubt why?" inquired her friend.

"Indeed, yes," said the Marchioness hesitatingly, "unless—"

"Unless," interrupted Lady Isabel, "you forget the spherical poppy-coloured figure that use to sail about in an amber gown, you would not."

"Oh, I recollect now!" cried the Marchioness, and she laughed. "Poor Lady Mandeville! often have I seen her capacious figure arrayed in such a dress; it would mortify me, I own, to be mistaken for her."

Lady Isabel cast down her long-fringed eye-lids, while something like a smile of contempt played about her mouth; but it was a beautiful smile, and recalled all Lord Arabin to Lady Glenallan's fancy.

"Do you think," said she, "that in any dress *you* could be mistaken, and for Lady Mandeville, of all women in the world!"

"No, not for her exactly, I don't think I could," returned the Marchioness, "but I might for some one with as bad a taste if I adopted her ladyship's costume."

Lady Isabel shook her head: "Oh, it was only en badinage," said she, "that I would have put you off the dress, for I really think it very pretty, and that after being seen on you, yellow will become the rage."

"Most certainly will it, my Lady Isabel," observed the dressmaker, "for we have people here every hour, on whom we can impose the very ugliest colour, or pattern, or dress, or any thing we have in our rooms, while we call it '*la couleur de Glenallan, la fantaisie de Glenallan, la robe de Glenallan.*' Not that I do permit



this to be ugly," continued Madame Frumeau, "for I conceive it to be beautiful, superbe, and for a complexion like my Lady Glenallan's, above all things created; but then to prove how people's opinion and liking of a dress is determined by the person on whom it is seen, and that might disgust and revolt upon de Lady Mandeville, of whom you spoke, and whom I would say, from mere supposition, imagination, was gross, heavy, embonpoint, upon my Lady Glenallan would ravish, delight, and make ladies say, as they do every hour to me, 'Oh I must have this, or that, Madame Frumeau, whether it be pretty or not, for I saw it upon the Marchioness of Glenallan at de Opera, or at Almack's, or at de Drawing-room, or somewhere or other, and it did make her look most divine.'"

"Foolish people!" said the Marchioness, laughing. "They think," observed Lady Isabel, "that the thing in which Lady Glenallan looks best, must be most lovely; and are, for the most part, mistaken," said her Ladyship, "I generally choosing things, not for their beauty, but for their novelty." "Apropos! to the Mandevilles, however," added the Marchioness, "I wonder where they all are now?"

"Oh! dispersed in every direction," returned Lady Isabel; "the Baronet turned his mother and sisters out of doors as soon as he came to the title."

"And little wonder," observed the Marchioness, "such a ridiculous extravagant set as they were! I am sure I have often seen those girls wear dresses which I should not have thought of doing."

"And behave in a manner you'd have thought of still less!" observed Lady Isabel, trying on, as she spoke, a beautiful bonnet.

"Oh! for behaviour," returned the Marchioness contemptuously, "they were the talk of town and country; the way they used to entrap men, was actually scandalous."

"Yes, I used to be kept in a dreadful fright about Edward," observed Lady Isabel, "and the very idea of his marrying a Mandeville, actually annihilated me."

"Did he admire them?" carelessly inquired Lady Glenallan, as she twisted about a wreath of convolvuluses.

"No, I don't think he did," returned her friend in the same tone, but fixing her gazelle-like eyes, for a moment, on those of the Marchioness, as if to say, "not at least as he admires you."

Lady Glenallan rather felt, than saw, that expressive look; and, slightly blushing, turned to make some trifling inquiry of Madame Frumeau.

"No, I never made up any thing for the Miss Mandevilles," was the answer, "and indeed, I did hear they were so very particular, that it was impossible to please them."

"I suspect you think pretty much the same of me," observed Lady Glenallan, half smiling.

"Oh! my Lady, what a comparison!" was of course, the reply.

"Not a very unapt one either," remarked the Marchioness aside to Lady Isabel. "But," she continued aloud, "I'm a spoilt child, and always shall be, nothing pleases me."

"Excusez moi, Madame," interrupted the dress-maker, "this cap, if you would but try it on, would certainly please you; the ribbon so nouvelle—a lovely vine-leaf pattern, then the lace you yourself see a piece of Mechlin."

"Oh! its very pretty, they are all very pretty," returned the Marchioness, "but I've scores of such things at home; and, in truth," added her Ladyship with something between a yawn and a smile, "I don't know what brought me here."

"Oh! allow me to hope, my Lady," said the polite Frenchwoman, "that it was to be tempted with something; and, assurance, there be some unique articles here. This dress," displaying a silk à la rose de Provence, "is really the newest thing, nothing like it has yet appeared in London; and de color would match your Ladyship's so divinely."

"Oh! but it's a complete summer thing," ob-

served Lady Glenallan, without regarding it for a moment.

"Pardonnez moi, my Lady, it is that happy mixture which is quite de rage now. These damask roses at bottom—intermixed with de Chinese, give it as much an aspect de l'hiver as could be desired, while their removal would, at any time, make it a dress pour la midi de l'été."

"It might suit a person," observed Lady Glenallan, "obliged to make one dress answer every season."

"That person be not my Lady," observed Madame Frumeau laughing.

"No, and consequently I don't want those convenient sort of things," said the Marchioness.

"Well, do but regard, my Lady, this spangled crape, this gold muslin, this crimson velvet, this white satin, any one of which dresses would look so charming on your Ladyship."

"Oh! I don't want any thing of the kind," said Lady Glenallan, "I never wear such things, except at court. If you had happened to have had a lace dress, or a very elegant muslin, I might have taken it; but that's all."

"Well, my Lady, what can be more elegant than this India muslin, so richly flowered as it is at the bottom, so beautifully inserted with lace at top."

"Oh! nothing, nothing, certainly!" replied the Marchioness; "but I don't know whether I should like it. What do you think of it, Isabel? Do you think that or a white crape would be best?"

"That, of the two," said Lady Isabel, who was trying coloured wreaths in her hair, "but, to tell you the truth, I don't think you want either, unless something has befallen the myriad of dresses I was looking at the other day."

"No, they are all safe," returned the Marchioness with a languid smile. "But what *do* I want? is the question."

"Shall I turn moralizer," said Lady Isabel, looking too lovely for a Mentor, "and say you want a perfect

conviction of your happiness, when you can so unconcernedly ask that question?"

The Marchioness laughed. "Morality doesn't come well from you just now, Isabel," said she, "engaged in so unimportant a pursuit, as deciding the merit of artificial flowers."

"I am afraid it doesn't come well from me at any time," said her Ladyship, sighing.

"Whereas it always becomes me," playfully observed Lady Glenallan.

"Oh! always," said Lady Isabel in the same tone, "but what would not become you, may I ask?"

"I'll show you in a moment," returned the Marchioness, and she put on Lady Isabel's bonnet, which the latter had left on a table; "this foreign concern, in which you look so charming, would disguise me."

"Disguise you!" repeated her friend, and, as if attracted by some object, she suddenly flew to the window; "I see a person who will tell me if it disguises you—if any thing can disguise you," her Ladyship continued, opening it, and calling, by the familiar appellation of Edward, to some one in the street.

Who could be Edward, simply Edward, to Lady Isabel, but—Lord Arabin: and the very idea of his being called up to look at her, covered Lady Glenallan's cheeks with blushes.

"My dear creature, what are you about?" her Ladyship hastily cried, untying the bonnet and attempting to take it off.

"Oh! nothing, nothing," said Lady Isabel, and flew over to prevent her, but in attempts to do so, occasioning the downfall of all the Marchioness's beautiful hair. So that when the Earl entered, there stood Lady Glenallan, her wild auburn tresses falling from underneath a scarlet bonnet, her colour brightening, her eyes wandering here and there in beautiful confusion. She was lovely to behold, and so Lord Arabin seemed to think; but it was only in the glance of a moment he betrayed his sentiments, for there were bystanders before whom he wished not to compromise her dignity or his own;

and, indeed, the Marchioness left no time for contemplation : turning quickly to Lady Isabel, she said, " For what did you summon your brother, was it to take us to the carriage ?"

" No," cried his enchanting sister, " but to tell me whether you ought instantly to order yourself a bonnet like mine. Isn't it, Edward," she continued, appealing to the Earl, " the most becoming thing you ever saw upon Lady Glenallan ?"

" That," said his Lordship, who had ventured into the room, with the air of a man ever welcome with women, " it would be difficult to say, since every thing becomes her so well !"

" True," returned Lady Isabel, " but," she was continuing, when the Marchioness interrupted her, by saying, " Do you think, Isabel, that I'll stand here to be complimented in this way ? No, I return you your bonnet, which only looked beautiful on me, by occasioning a resemblance to you."

" If after this I am vain," said Lady Isabel, smiling, " it must be allowed that none had ever so much reason ! but perfect the complaint by perpetuating the resemblance, and allow me to leave my bonnet here, that you may get one made up like it."

" Oh ! de tout mon cœur !" replied the Marchioness, " but would it not be better to send it, than entail on yourself the buying of another."

" Unless Edward is in a generous mood perhaps it would," returned Lady Isabel, " and indeed he looks too thoughtful to be so."

The Earl smiled, " Oh ! you may reckon on my generosity to any extent you please," said he, " provided you save me the trouble of selecting its object."

" Most willingly shall I," returned his sister, and was not long in fulfilling her engagement : from a profusion of elegant bonnets she selected a fine Leghorn, which, beautifully trimmed with scarlet and black, wanted but the addition of some scarlet flowers, to please her : while these were putting in, Lord Arabin led Lady Glenallan to the carriage, and standing by it till his sister

came down, continued in conversation with the Marchioness. "We shall see you, I hope, for certain to-night," said he; "Isabel will be miserable if you don't come, and the General," alluding to her Ladyship's husband, "thinks nothing right where you are not."

"He is very kind, you are very kind, and if it is possible—"

"Is any thing impossible which you wish?" asked Lord Arabin.

"Oh! my Lord," said she, and shook her head, "do you take me for an angel, that my wishes may never be unreasonable?"

"I should take him for something devoid of heart, whose delight it would not be to gratify them, even if they were, but in this instance there is neither unreasonableness or impossibility."

"Not in my eyes, certainly."

"Then in whose?"

"In Lord Glenallan's."

The Earl was silent for a moment; at length he said, "How mortifying this to Isabella, and to me, or at least to me, for I can plainly perceive that it is not so much the wife of General Wandesmere, as the sister of Lord Arabin your husband would have you to shun; he thinks any society better for you than mine, any place safer than that where I am to be."

"One would think," said the Marchioness, half smiling, "you might rather consider that in the light of a complaint, than of a mortification, my Lord."

"Perhaps I ought," returned the Earl with a sigh, "but I own I am little inclined to put a flattering construction on any thing which deprives me of your society."

"Well, if it depends on me," said the Marchioness, as Lady Isabel approached, "you shall see me to-night, my Lord. I'll not flatter you, by appearing to conceive you so dangerous."

The Earl looked rather offended by the gay tone in which she spoke, and observing, "That was evidently a matter of such extreme indifference to her, ought not

certainly to be of deep concern to him," prepared to hand his sister into the carriage.

As soon as the latter was seated, and Lord Arabin had left them, Lady Isabel asked her friend, "What she had said during their short conference, to make her brother look so grave?"

The Marchioness told her, and then Lady Isabel looked serious also, and said she didn't know whether she oughtn't to join Edward in being very angry.

"No, you ought not, indeed you ought not," said the Marchioness, in caressing accents, "when you know well that I never refuse any thing to you, without punishing myself."

"Why then resort to that alternative?" inquired Lady Isabel, "surely there is no necessity for it."

"But too much," returned the Marchioness, "if I may believe what Lord Glenallan would persuade me: he says, the world begins to talk strangely of our intimacy, and will not be persuaded of its innocency."

"The world!" repeated Lady Isabel contemptuously; "what is the world to Lady Glenallan."

"Nothing in theory," returned the Marchioness, "but, in reality, a censor whose suspicions I could never survive."

"Prove that you despise them," exclaimed Lady Isabel, "and they will fall powerless to the ground."

"How can I do that, but by continuing in appearance to deserve them?"

"In no way," said her friend; "and as that is the alternative, take it, resting assured that where retreat would imply shame, perseverance will obtain victory."

The Marchioness sighed: "A victory over what?" at length she said,— "over malice, which it might have been thought my character and situation would have protected me from ever having excited."

Lady Isabel smiled, as if at the fallaciousness of such a hope; and with the air of one who spoke from experience, observed, "While there is a world, Lady Glenallan, it will ever be a censorious one, and the subjects of its bitterness, the objects which are the most

elevated, whether it be by beauty, fortune, birth, or rank : judge then, whether, when you unite all these to every thing else, you can expect to escape."

"I fear," said the Marchioness, "you speak too true ; and that, without attributing to myself any advantages by nature great enough to excite envy, I enjoy too many by fortune, not to ensure it."

"Depend upon it you do," replied Lady Isabel ; "and that for two such exalted personages as you and I to form a friendship ; one possessing a husband most inferior to herself, the other a brother, not deficient in the graces which ladies admire—without the ill-natured world presuming that half of the attractions of Lady Isabella Wandesmere lay to Lady Glenallan, in those of the Earl of Arabin, would be a stretch of charity to which mankind has not yet arrived."

"Is this the inevitable consequence ?" sighed Lady Glenallan.

"The inevitable," returned her friend ; "and whether my friendship is worth continuing at such a price, you are to decide."

"Oh ! it is worth continuing at any price," cried the Marchioness ; "and I am wrong to be affected by the slanders of so illiberal a world. What would it have to offer me in exchange for your love ?"

"Its good opinion," contemptuously observed Lady Isabel.

"That, if it is lost, must be gained at a less costly rate," replied the Marchioness, "or else despised."

"You say right ; you do right ; you are perfect, my charming friend !" cried Lady Isabel, embracing her, "and I would ask no prouder title, than those of your friend, and Edward's sister."

"Edward's sister !" repeated the Marchioness, "I would that fate had made his lovely sister also mine."

"Yes, by rendering you his wife."

Lady Glenallan smiled, but reply was prevented by their stopping at her house in Grosvenor Square ; and she bid adieu to Lady Isabel, after reiterated promises of using every endeavour to join her party in the even-



ing. In these professions Lady Glenallan was sincere ; and she really determined on making any sacrifices, sooner than disoblige one, for whom she was yet to consider the least she had ever made too great.

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## CHAPTER XV.

“ There is a mystic thread of life,  
So dearly wreath'd with mine alone,  
That destiny's remorseless knife  
At once must sever both or none.”

In becoming a husband, the Count de Meurville had not ceased to be a lover ; on the contrary, his affection seemed to increase ; and that tenderness, which had been restrained by timidity in the latter, knew no bounds in the former.

That the object towards whom this intensity of passion was directed, though in the highest degree amiable and lovely, was not altogether superior enough to justify, or equal to adequately appreciate it, is certain. Agnes, adoring her husband, could yet form an idea of happiness in sharing his society with the world ; he could only, in their being the world to each other. She mixed in society for its own sake ; he, but considering it necessary from his rank and fortune. Happier as the husband of Agnes, than the possession of this world's honours could make him, De Meurville seemed likely to forget his laurels as a hero, and his character as a courtier : but not so the Countess for him ; and all the fascinations which had lulled him into indolence, were exerted to rouse him from it, his distinction being necessary to her vanity as a woman, though it could never add to her happiness as a wife. And to hang fearlessly upon that arm which, in battle, had been so often raised—to be smiled upon by those lips which kings had listened to—and held from danger



to that bosom which, blazing with orders, excited a gazing multitude's admiration—was a triumph that, if it was dear in the hours of retirement, was a thousand times more so, in those of publicity and grandeur ; when a court was the theatre, and admiring man, and envying woman the spectators. But with the feelings and character of the Countess De Meurville, our readers will become better acquainted by our transcribing a letter of the latter to her usual correspondent, Miss Morton.

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

You accuse me of filling up my letters with hopes, fears, anticipations, &c. respecting you, when the minutest thing regarding myself would be more interesting ; but surely you are mistaken, and forget that while the eventful part of your life is commencing, the romance of mine is ended—ended when its enjoyments first began. If, however, my continuing a heroine is not necessary to my continuing an object of interest to you, I will, as you desire, make myself the theme of this epistle ; and thereby indulge the inclination I ever entertain of doing what obliges me to talk of De Meurville. Already, I believe, I have given you sketches of the life I lead here, and of those with whom it is passed. The tenor of the former is, for the most part, monotonous ; the generality of the latter, not altogether agreeable. They look upon me, I can easily see, as a spoilt child, or rather as a spoilt wife, and treat me, when, De Meurville is away, which he for the most part is at court, in a very different manner from what they dare do when he is present. That their conduct would make me unhappy, if any thing could make De Meurville's wife so, is certain ; but hitherto I have found that nothing but his displeasure can : and while I smile at their paltry efforts to embitter my felicity, the most trifling look or word of dissatisfaction from Clifford has power to make me so miserable, as none but a severer judge than he, would ever desire I should be. My sufferings, indeed, may be sometimes increased by a

conviction of my husband, not altogether justifiably, exciting them ; for if he has a fault, and who was ever without one—it is that of jealousy ; and to see me in high spirits, when he is not himself the cause or the sharer of them, is sufficient, at any time, to throw him into a gloom, which nothing but my caresses can dissipate. That this proceeds from the excess of his love, and the constant fear it inspires of losing mine, I am well aware ; but then ought he to indulge such a fear at the expense of my peace ? Ought he to embitter my happiness by suspicions, which he himself will afterward confess ungrounded ? It was but the other evening I gave him a lecture on the subject : “ Who, De Meurville,” said I, “ may not fear a rival, when you begin to do so—for who had ever so little reason ? ” But what led to the subject I must tell you :—I told him I would, as the only way to punish him, for I cannot find in my heart to resort to the severer way of treating him with coldness. None could, I believe, that had to contend with such fondness as he lavishes on me. No : there is not a woman upon earth who could ! But to return to the point. We had dining with us, the other day, an English traveller, and to me, being English, he attached himself particularly during the evening ; well, this could not be, without my lovely Clifford taking it into his head that I liked the man—or he me ; though neither of us had seen each other before ; and in a most dismal, dissatisfied sort of a way, he threw himself on a sofa opposite to us, and fixed his eyes reproachfully on me. As soon as I perceived it, and I did not instantly, for Mr. Deloraine was giving me an account of some of his friends, I went over to him, and, under some other pretext, took an opportunity of inquiring if any thing was the matter. In evident displeasure, he did not immediately reply, but presently, and averting his face from mine, he expressed a wonder that I should have noticed him.

“ Noticed you, Clifford ! ” repeated I, “ about what, then, do you think I was so interested ? ”

"Oh, about what you are always more interested than any thing else," was his unkind reply,—“flirting.”

Surprised and wounded by his manner, my first impulse was to burst into tears; but my second, which did not on this occasion justify the adage, that says it is the best, determined me on a contrary line of proceeding; and returning to my companion, I set about talking in a manner, that to those who could not hear the substance of my conversation, had all the appearance of what De Meurville accused me. However, the latter did not long sit to witness my affected vivacity, but starting up, invited a maiden gentlewoman, of whom he had not before taken the least notice, though she was sitting beside him, to play at picquet. Involuntarily I smiled, and our eyes met; Clifford understood the nature of my thoughts, and I could perfectly enter into his. Each was occupied with the other, though neither of us wished to appear so; but soon weary of keeping up the appearance of spirits for which I had no foundation, I got rid of my English friend, and stealing across the room, sank down at the back of De Meurville's chair. At first he took no notice of it, and allowed me to kiss him unregarded, but presently feeling, I believe, my tears trickling on his neck, he took my hand, and leaning back his head to kiss my cheek, asked me what was the matter. “Oh nothing, nothing,” murmured I, “when you speak to me thus; but when it is otherwise every thing, my very heart sickens, and I cannot stand it.” He sighed, and drawing me closer to him, asked whether he had not reason to be dissatisfied just now?

“No, you had not, indeed you had not!” returned he, “or if you had, you have every moment of my life, for never was I more innocently engaged.”

A smile was his only reply, but that was very eloquent; and glancing at his partner, who, too stupid to mind what either of us had been about, was classing her cards, told me I must not disturb him. To be near him was happiness enough for me, and I sat quiet as he or she could desire, till we retired. When we did,

however, De Meurville threw his arms around me, and told me how unhappy it made him, to have caused my tears:

"Ah, De Meurville," said I, "if these tears, or many more, could avert all you will cause me to shed by continuing to indulge your unjust suspicions, I should be saved sorrow, and you repentance; but as it is, they are but forerunners of those fated to deluge your bosom and mine; of those, which if they owed their first origin to love, will their last to despair." De Meurville could not bear to hear me talk so; he held me to his heart, he overcame me with his caresses, he called me every endearing name by which man can address woman. But, notwithstanding, and adoring him as I do, I continued: "If you cannot bear to imagine your Agnes dying by the grief which suspicion from you would occasion her, could you bear to behold, to inflict it? Ah, my Clifford, your tears tell me that you could not, and will not your actions also? Will you not endeavour for my sake to check the tendency to jealousy which will destroy us both, to banish those suspicions which nothing in my conduct shall ever justify? Recollect of whom it is that you form them, of *her* who loved you before she knew what love was; who continued to do so, after many lips had taught it, many eyes attempted to inspire it; of *her* who cherished your remembrance when all around it was dark, when every other was fleeting—of *her*, my beloved, who will soon be the mother of your child!"

De Meurville did not seem to need being reminded of my titles to his confidence and esteem, but expressed his sense of them, as if they had been far greater. Encircling me with his arms, he promised to endeavour at more command over himself, more confidence in me—expressed his conviction that nothing but the jealous apprehension inspired by love could occasion his fears or excuse his doubts—that it was loving so much himself, made him fearful others would do so too, and he could not bear the idea.

"Dearest!" said I, "it is indeed your partiality leads

you to fear it, for except as I may be supposed amiable from being beloved by you, I am not now calculated to inspire particular notice ; any beauty I might once have possessed, ill health and sorrow have effaced, while my spirits are so variable, that except from you who know me, I should be more likely to incur the charge of affectation, than the homage of admiration."

If you could have heard De Meurville, you would indeed suppose I had little foundation for my assertion ; but my own heart, a truer mirror than his, tells me I have much, and the sinkings of the latter, with the shadow-like appearance of my figure, often so alarm me, that I rush into society to avoid being alone. In fact, between you and I—for to no other dare I breathe the idea, lest it should reach my husband—I entertain very great doubts of whether I shall ever survive my confinement. Nature, as far as I can judge, seems exhausted within me, and the temporary renovation of health I enjoyed after my marriage, to have caused a re-action which will destroy me : all the natural colour of my cheeks is fled, and my once high-beating pulse, languid and inert. To my beloved, I endeavour to make this appear the necessary consequence of my situation ; and he, deceived by his hopes, as by my assumed vivacity, and the hectic flushes which frequently brighten my countenance, is not at present, I think, alarmed on my account. Indeed if he were, and that his sufferings bore any proportion to his love, they would be such as I could not live to behold—or he to sustain ! Of the latter, it would be impossible to give you an idea ; it exceeds my description, my power of return—almost my wishes. Not only by actions, but by thoughts does he evince it ; and whether happy enough to be with him, or unfortunate enough to be separated from him, I am equally convinced of being the only real object of his concern. When the first, 'tis by looks, by language, by attentions ; when the other, by every anticipation of my wishes, indulgence to my tastes, and occupation for my time, that his imagination can suggest. He will, in opposition to all I can say, continue

sending me such beautiful dresses, such quantities of books, music, &c. with every other luxury or curiosity he can purchase ; that to see me, and the apartments appropriated to me, you would suppose I was a princess. In fact, it is De Meurville's delight and desire, that I should appear like one, not with an idea that it gratifies my vanity, for he knows that his esteem only has power to do that, but to mortify those whom, he is aware, consider me an object very unworthy of exciting such regard ; and never is my Clifford so happy as in distinguishing the creature whom all around endeavour to depress. The other day I went to court for the third or fourth time, I forget which, and was introduced to the Baroness de Roncevalles, of whom I had before heard De Meurville speak : she is a lovely, lively woman, and paid me so many compliments, that if I had not already received more than ever can be paid me again, I should literally have sunk under them ; but, as it was, I only blushed and disclaimed them, and looked up at De Meurville and down on the ground, and every where, but upon the smiling eyes of the Baroness, who, when she told me I was the happiest of women, paid me, with due deference to her ladyship, the only compliment I valued, for the only one which included my Clifford. By the by, the latter has taken it into his head of late, that drawing or writing much hurts me. So if you hear but seldom from me, before my confinement, you must lay it all on him ; as also must you, if, having a girl, I do not name it Catharine : he will, I know, wish for Agnes—and, indeed, something like presentiment would almost incline me also. My child will, I fear, be the only relic he will have of its mother, and therefore should bear the name which, as having once belonged to her, its father will best love. Adieu, my Catharine, this conviction may be imaginary—and I yet live for De Meurville and for you. Should it not prove so, Heaven grant that both you and he may find consolation.

I am, &c. &c.

AGNES DE MEURVILLE.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*"Alas ! that passion's clouds should rise  
That mind's pure mirror to defile !  
Why was her heart unlike her eyes ?  
Why was her love unlike her smile ?"*

WHEN the Marchioness of Glenallan left Lady Isabel Wandesmere on the morning which we have related in a preceding chapter, it was with a resolution to be of her party in the evening ; and knowing the Marquess would oppose himself to her intentions, she determined to keep out of the way of the latter, until the time should be passed in which his consent, or the contrary, would be availing. But her Ladyship's intention was unfortunately frustrated by her going accidentally into the very room where Lord Glenallan was sitting, and a little surprised, for she had understood him to be out, the Marchioness was at first about to retire, but the seriousness of his look arrested her attention, and between something of carelessness, and something of curiosity, she sauntered on, and threw herself into a seat.

"I was thinking of you, Georgiana," said he, raising his eyes from a table covered with papers, over which he had been apparently ruminating.

"Is that an uncommon circumstance ?" inquired her Ladyship in her usual heartless tone.

"It would seem not," replied he ; "uncommon things make common things forgot : and your idea was just now associated with such vulgar every-day concerns as bills and creditors."

"Dear, I am sorry to have disturbed such agreeable reflections, but I believe I might have postponed my visit for ever, if I waited for the time in which my image and disagreeable ones would not be combined in your memory."



The Marquess shook his head. "It was not *once* so," said he.

"Oh, if we begin to talk of *once* and *now*, my Lord," returned she quickly, and with something between a smile of bitterness and a sigh of regret, "we shall find such thousand sources of variety, to make the enumeration of one ridiculous."

"I fear we should," replied he, "and yet it need not have been so; *once* might have been *now*, and *now* would have been happy!"

"I scarcely see how," said she; "each has long discovered that neither is an angel."

"Me, I suspect," returned the Marquess, "you never supposed one, and therefore are not disappointed. But you might have kept up the delusion for ever."

"Probably, but as any thing like deceit is the furthest thing in the world from my character, I did not choose it."

"Surprising," said the Marquess, "that you, so superior to deceit in yourself, can be imposed on by it in another!"

"I am not aware that I am," returned she.

"I and every one else are," observed her Lord.

"Then you and every one else act very ungenerously, in not enlightening me on the subject."

"Perhaps from a conviction of its inutility."

"One can scarcely judge of what has never been tried."

"But of what has, you will allow, Georgiana, we can," replied he; "and on the subject to which I allude, every thing but unkindness has been tried in vain. From me you have heard warning, remonstrance, solicitation, and advice. From the world, of course, you could not expect similar candour."

"Really I don't know, it does not seem to have been restrained by any sentiments of delicacy from alarming you," observed the Marchioness.

"It was not necessary," returned her Lord, with something like a smile of compassion, "for the world to inform me of what I could judge from ocular de-

monstration, namely, that you are playing a desperate game with your own happiness, and my fortune."

"You do well," said the Marchioness bitterly, "to add what is nearest your heart, and not even affect that the loss of my happiness could lessen yours. But I will be equally candid, and as it was your fortune and not yourself I married, confess myself considering the former made but to be disposed of at my pleasure."

"Unfeeling woman!" exclaimed the Marquess; "it is not sufficient that you load me with debts, which, contracted every night at the gaming-table, exceed even my means to discharge; that besides these, I am overwhelmed with others of so enormous an extent, as nothing but your being an Asiatic queen, or mistress, could justify your incurring—but I must be reproached as indifferent to your happiness, and told that that was but your due, which the world in general might tell you was only mine."

"You assume a strange tone, my Lord," said Lady Glenallan haughtily, "and let me tell you, that if you come to talk of my obligations, with much more reason may I of yours. Do you think (and she looked as proud as became Lord Malverton's daughter, and Lord Glenallan's wife), do you think that this form, these arms, for which princes have contended, would ever have been yours, had you nothing more important to offer than yourself?"

"Add not insult to ingratitude, Georgiana," returned he, "but tell me whether the man exists who, knowing you as I do, would not consider all your beauty dearly bought, by having to entail your temper with it."

"There are some questions," replied Lady Glenallan passionately, "which can be only replied to by others; and I would ask whether the woman lives who, bringing rank, family, connexions, similar to mine, would submit to be addressed in language such as yours? No, there does not—or I at least am not that woman; and let me tell you, my Lord, that the time may yet come, in which you will look back on the present as a season of peace, a period of tranquillity—when my temper, ex-

asperated by yours, will indeed become such as no beauty of mind or person will atone for, when you will hate me, loathe me, curse me, think the same country, kingdom, world, too small to contain us."

Lord Glenallan regarded her with a sort of horror; and in truth, amidst all her beauty, she was an object to inspire nothing else—to hear such language proceed from such lips! such demoniac passions glare from her beautiful eyes! was a sight more hateful than the most hideous deformity could have been, and appeared calculated to call down the vengeance of that nature, whose only crime towards her had been that of being too beneficent.

"Is it a fiend, or my wife," at length the Marquess murmured, "whom I hear speaking thus? Is it the creature I have cherished to idolatry? or something that I have hated, injured, despised?"

"'Tis something to whom you have done worse," returned she, with a defying air—"whom you have pretended to love; but from whom you would debar every thing that her heart desires, the acquaintance she most solicits, the pleasures she most enjoys."

The Marquess interrupted her, "Comprehend your every thing, Georgiana," said he, "in my disliking for you the company of Lady Isabella Wandesmere, and the entertainments which she gives."

"Yes, truly," said Lady Glenallan, contemptuously, "because you know nothing else do I prize so much."

"No," returned the Marquess, "but simply because I believe there is nothing in the world you ought to prize so little! If you knew, if you could ever know, how you sink yourself by attempting to raise her; how completely she is forsaken by the wise and good, and how much her late marriage has served to confirm the idea the world long entertained of her want of delicacy, and disposition to avarice, you would, I think, for your own sake, avoid her society—fearful, lest that by sharing her friendship, you should share her fate also."

"To share that of my Isabel must ever be happiness," was the only reply the Marchioness deigned.

"I doubt," returned her Lord, "whether you would consider it happiness to be slighted where you are now caressed, to be shunned where you have been courted, to be pitied where you have been envied."

"It is a fate I am little fearful of incurring," replied the Marchioness; "to prove how little, this very evening I shall attend Lady Isabel's ball."

"You do," said the Marquess, "and to my house you never more return!"

"As you please!" replied she with vaunted indifference; but unable to keep up even the appearance of calmness, she burst into a passionate flood of tears, "Oh that I had never, never seen you!" she cried, clenching her hands, and speaking as if from her very, very heart, "that I had never seen you," she continued to repeat, stamping with rage, and tearing her beautiful hair.

"That you never, never had!" spake from the bottom of his soul Lord Glenallan.

"Then I might have been happy, yes I should have been happy," she cried, "but as it is, I am miserable, beyond any thing, miserable!"

"And so you will ever remain," replied he, "while you indulge your infernal tempers; heaven would not be happy if you were there." "Hell would not be miserable while you were not!" exclaimed Lady Glenallan, almost convulsed with fury.

"Is it come to this? Oh! is it come to this?" cried he. "Would to heaven. I could have foreseen the wife I was choosing, when I married you!"

"Would to heaven," cried the Marchioness with equal vehemence, "that Georgiana Granville could have formed any idea of what the Marchioness of Glenallan would have to endure!"

"You talk of endurance!" said her husband, and he smiled in the midst of his misery. But in reality, Lady Glenallan did endure more than she could ever inflict; and to see her lying there, her hair dishevelled, her dress disarranged, her colour burning, was a melancholy and humiliating sight. To think that a crea-

ture like Lady Glenallan, for whom nature had done so much, education should have done so little—that she, whom even in rage and hatred, looked lovely, did not possess virtue, which would have made her more than human! But it was not by looks alone that Lady Glenallan would have excited compassion. To hear her sobs, her screams, her execrations, her despair, it would have been believed that fate, instead of folly, had made her of womankind most miserable. She raved of her mother, as if in her she had lost her guardian angel, reviled her husband, as if he had been her bitterest foe; and cursed the day, the hour, in which she had consented to marry him; wishing it had been the last of his life, or hers! Oh it was melancholy to hear her; but to behold her husband was more melancholy still: like a frantic man he paced the apartment, one hand over his eyes, as if to shut out the image of his wife, the other across his bosom, in mute and overwhelming agony. “That I had died,” at length he said, “sooner than have lived to hear you wish it! That I had died,” he repeated, when the door suddenly opened, and (unannounced and unattended) Mr. Granville entered, a little surprised at the scene before him; but not so much as one would have been, to whom similar ones were a perfect novelty. He was at first about to retire, but Lady Glenallan detained him. Springing from the sofa, and shutting the door, she thus began: “Sir, you were witness to my first acquaintance and marriage, with Lord Glenallan. I now only desire that you witness our eternal separation and farewell. He has lost all share in my affections, I every desire to merit his, and that we may never, never meet again, is the first wish of my heart!” Here Lady Glenallan was interrupted by her emotion, but it was not the emotion of sorrow or repentance; and Mr. Granville exclaimed, “What means all this, to what am I to attribute it? I come here the bearer of pleasing tidings (for such your father being created Marquess, I doubt not you will reckon,) and find you in the heroics, and Glenallan in the gloom.”

"You see things in a less serious point of view than circumstances warrant," said the Marchioness, "for I appeal to Lord Glenallan whether my sentiments are not the echoes of his; and if they are, this is not a time for levity."

"But they are not, I'll be bound for it they are not!" said Mr. Granville, and he turned with an inquiring look towards the Marquess. "It is only her proud blood that's up at something or other you have said amiss; is it not so, my Lord?"

"For the credit of her nature I will hope it," said the Marquess, "as what I lay not to the account of her pride, I must to that of something worse."

"No, no, there is nothing in the world worse," returned Mr. Granville; "and if there is, it does not exist in Georgiana; so forgive and forget."

"I can forgive," said the Marquess, extending his hand, "but it is only by not forgetting—it is only by remembering her as Lady Malverton's daughter."

"I beg you will not make the least exertion of your memory," replied Lady Glenallan haughtily, "but when you cease to love Georgiana, cease to affect caring for her mother also; as she would not much value the regard of one who set so little estimation on that of her child."

"Do not," said the Marquess, "do not, for your own sake, cast off the only love you may one day have to boast; the only one I think likely to survive your pride, your indifference, your unkindness, and disdain! For your mother will not, if I know her right, be the first to extend a hand to one who, in forgetting her duties as a wife, proves that she possesses a very imperfect idea of those of a daughter."

"I'll not stay here to be lectured in this way," cried Lady Glenallan impatiently; and snatching up her bonnet, which at coming in she had taken off, was about to retire, when Mr. Granville detained her.

"Stop," said he, "this must not be! I cannot allow you to part thus, I cannot allow the daughter of my brother, and the friend I esteem, to separate thus dis-

united. Recollect, Georgiana," he continued, "the many claims your husband has upon your regard; you were the woman of his choice, his selection, from the world! And you, my Lord," addressing Lord Glenallan, "recollect the thousand claims she has on you, her youth, her beauty, her separation from her parents, and more than all, remember what she was in that hour in which first you called her your own. Need I adjure you by fairer, fonder recollections?" He need not indeed, these were sufficient to allay all Lord Glenallan's anger; and Georgiana, arrayed in smiles such as she had worn in that blissful hour, would for ever have effaced it; but on him these smiles were never more to beam, and as he attempted to take the cold reluctant hand of Lady Glenallan, he was checked by a heartless demand from her "of whether it were not usual to make terms before a treaty of peace was signed?"

"Certainly," returned the Marquess, in the same indifferent tone, "when the terms are thought of more consequence than the treaty."

"Then," said Lady Glenallan, "I capitulate that my going to a ball to-night shall not justify your turning me out of your house to-morrow."

"Nonsensical," interrupted Mr. Granville, "to presume such a possibility!"

"It might seem so indeed," returned the Marchioness, bitterly, "but my Lord can tell you that it is not wholly without foundation I do so."

"No, I do not pretend to say it is," cried the Marquess impatiently, "but to put an end at once to this altercation, which if it is not more agreeable to Mr. Granville, than it is to me, must be literally intolerable, I tell you, Lady Glenallan, that you have leave to go to this ball, or any other, while you consent to entail such an embargo on its pleasures, as the company of your husband will, I am fully aware, be ever considered."

"What you possess such a perfect conviction of," said the Marchioness, "I shall not take the trouble to dispute—to say nothing," her Ladyship insolently added, "of the difficulty I might find in doing so, but

leaving you to ruminate, like Lady Townly, on the miseries of matrimony, wish you and Mr. Granville a very good morning." So saying, the Marchioness left the room.

To Lady Isabella Wandesmere's ball were invited all on whose acquaintance her Ladyship had the slightest claim; and that this comprehended a very limited number among the really respectable is certain, her Ladyship's marriage not having contributed to raise the character which she had lost before it. Indeed, so aware was Lady Isabel of the few and inferior forces it would be in her power to collect, that mere vanity would not have induced to a display of them, but envy, a sentiment paramount, did; and that this ball, if it did not raise her reputation, should reduce Lady Glenallan's to a nearer level with it, was the determination of Isabel, for difficult as it seems to believe, she hated and envied the woman whom she yet never ceased to flatter and oblige, and all her embraces and blandishments were but the caresses of a serpent, who entwines more closely, that he may sting more bitterly. To forward the purpose she had in view, Lady Isabel determined with her brother, that he should upon the night of her entertainment, be throughout the evening the companion of the Marchioness, and by looks and words, which none were more an adept in than he, confirm the report, which both knew, far better than Lady Glenallan, were circulated with respect to their intimacy. Even the style of Lady Isabel's fancy-ball, was to partake of the voluptuous character she wished it to inspire, and like Lady Glenallan's of last winter, in originality of design, and magnificence of arrangement, was, instead of the cold sparkling beauty of the North, to represent the green, glowing, gorgeous scenery of the East! For this purpose the apartments at Wandesmere house, which, divided from one another by immense folding doors, had the appearance, when all the latter were thrown open, of an interminable room, rather than of several, were to be spread with a velvet of the most verdant green, and undulated by art, and intersected with streams of silver to repre-



sent a lone and lovely valley. All around this, and so contrived, as to appear indeed the delicious solitudes, and luxuriant groves, of which they were in reality only the representatives, were to be hung paintings of vine, olive, plane, cypress, date trees, &c. occasionally displaying, amidst their embowered recesses, the figures of hermits, the gardens of convents, the rich plumage of birds, and the solitary forms of nuns; while through the whole, a thousand spicy, fragrant, odoriferous shrubs were to spread their balsamic sweetness, and orange, fig, citron, lemon, almond, &c. &c. to blossom and hang down with fruit wild and beautiful, as in their own native Palestine!

Lady Glenallan, in compliment to her friend's eastern entertainment, and eastern husband, for General Wandesmore had passed all his life in India, went to her ball in character of a Persian princess, and with her hair confined by knots of silver, and her dress composed of muslin splendidly spangled, looked most beautiful; while Lady Isabel wore the lowly habit of a peasant of Jerusalem, as if to contrast the humility of her garb, with the superiority of herself, and the splendour of which she was mistress and creator. Than the latter, no imagination can paint any thing so lovely and magnificent; nor was there wanting the voice of the nightingale, or the tingling of the vesper bell, to complete the sweet serenity of a scene, in which the deep blue sky, and lovely moon above, were the only rivals to the earth beneath!

As Lord Arabin was the sole occupier of Lady Glenallan's thoughts, so was he the only object for whom, on entering Lady Isabel's splendid apartments in the evening, she looked. All their oriental grandeur, their unparalleled magnificence, were thrown away upon her; and she had no thoughts, eyes, heart, for any one but him, who was not there to gratify them; even Isabel, in all her nun-like, moonlight beauty, was beheld unheeded. She seemed to forget her brother—and who could be forgiven for that? Not his sister, not the woman in the world, who must best know his attractions. But,

just as Lady Glenallan was sitting down, and, in discontented silence, making reflections similar to the latter, an opening in the crowd before her showed him who was the subject of them : and Lord Arabin stood before her, but apparently unconscious that he did so ; his look was thoughtful, his manner vacant, and his whole appearance that of one compelled into a scene in which he took no interest. That this would have been mortifying to Lady Glenallan, if she could possibly suppose him aware that that scene contained her, is certain ; but convinced as she was that he entertained no such idea, it was in the highest degree gratifying ; and concealed alternately by muses, graces, and all the grotesque phantasmagoria of a fancy ball, her Ladyship sat surveying his Lordship in undisturbed delight, when suddenly, as if impelled by some invisible power, he started from the pillar, against which he had been leaning, and rushed across the room, heedless of every thing that intercepted his steps. Anxious to see the happy object to whom they were directed, Lady Glenallan leant forward, and, with uncontrollable delight, discovered that it was Lord Glenallan who had caught his eye ; and to whom, with hurried steps, he was making way. What a contrast did the graceful figure of the latter present to that of the former ; and how unlike was Lord Arabin to Lord Glenallan ! But the contrasting her husband with so bright a prototype, was not necessary to raise a blush on Lady Glenallan's cheeks, however it might deepen it ; for the Marquess would, at that moment, have appeared to disadvantage by the side of a far less accomplished person than the Earl of Arabin.

Flustered with drinking profusely of a beverage which, under the name of nectar, concealed some spirit of most exhilarating quality, he was talking and laughing in a manner quite unusual to him, and could scarcely reply intelligibly to Lord Arabin's inquiry of whether Lady Glenallan was in the room. But the Earl seemed to answer in the affirmative ; and, darting from the side of his Lordship, began, as the Marchioness rather felt than saw, to look around for her. Then, then,

indeed, could she afford to sit quiet, composed, and as if nothing in the world had interested her : for then she was certain of having, in a few moments, beside her, the man whose admiration she most valued—and so it was. Scarce had Lady Glenallan time to compose herself, before the Earl came over, and, with the smile he usually wore when rather conscious of his own power, than inclined to be submissive to hers, congratulated her on her having overcome her scruples.

"Not mine, my Lord, I had *none*," returned the Marchioness.

"Well, Lord Glenallan's?"

"He overcame them himself. I should have disdained to combat any thing so ridiculous."

"Ridiculous, indeed!" repeated Lord Arabin; but with a smile which falsified his words, and called a faint blush to Lady Glenallan's face. "I am sure none, to have seen us together this morning, or to see us now, would consider it dangerous for the same room to hold us."

The Marchioness made no reply,

And Lord Arabin continued, "I could almost think, Lady Glenallan, that it was to keep me in suspense as to whether I was to have the happiness of seeing you this evening, that you conjured up Lord Glenallan's scruples, for he isn't wont to be so very fastidious."

"I don't suspect the suspense would have weighed very heavy on your heart, my Lord," returned she, "were it even so."

"Then you little know that heart, Lady Glenallan," said he, "and still less yourself."

"Perhaps I know both too well," replied the Marchioness, "but," she continued, "you certainly do not give me reason to think, Lord Arabin, that the suspense terminated to your satisfaction."

"Because it did not," replied Lord Arabin, "if it did not to yours."

"Of that, my Lord, you might judge, I imagine, by seeing me here."

"Oh, Isabel would have power to attract you any where."

"To-night she must have power to attract every one I think," said Lady Glenallan. "I never saw, Lord Arabin, such a scene of enchantment as she has created; it comes nearest to the panorama of the valley of Sarnen, that still, lovely look! but it is of a character altogether more glowing and luxurious: oh! what would I give to visit the original!"

"Well, we will make a party, Lady Glenallan. I should be very happy to renew my acquaintance with Palestine in company with you; and Isabel, I am sure, would be delighted to commence hers."

"You have been there already then, my Lord," observed the Marchioness.

"Oh yes, with every where else, but when I had only an old rusty sage for my companion; and I am quite of Moore's opinion,

'That the best works of Nature improve,  
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.'

While Lord Arabin and Lady Glenallan continued talking thus, and getting by degrees into a serious and sentimental strain, the world about them were talking also; and Lady Isabel confirming by her looks and words the suspicions she heard passed on all sides, and occasionally addressed to herself, respecting them. Dancing and music commenced, and continued alternately; and Lady Glenallan was still the companion of the Earl. They sung together the duett of "The heart unknown to pride," and in a way very unequivocal:

'This hand than wealth is dearer,'

a line that occurred in it, the Earl sung with enthusiasm: and having still the Marchioness's hand in his, for they had been dancing together, and he continued to retain it, there was no need of the most eloquent eyes in the world to enforce the application he meant to convey.

As if it were, and, in fact it *was*, to give the Mar-

chioness scope for making her levity of conduct appear more conspicuous, Lady Isabel proposed the performing of the Coquette dance, in which partners go by turns round a circle, composed alternately of either sex, and, while the gentleman stops to turn each fair, the lady pauses to turn each gentleman, prefacing the doing so on both sides with a hesitation and capricious grace, which justifies the name of the dance. In this exhibition then, Lady Glenallan joined; and while the ill-natured and envious delighted to see her justifying the suspicions, and realizing the opinion they had formed of her, the more feeling and benevolent lamented, while they condemned, lamented that so lovely a creature as Lady Glenallan, radiant in every perfection, both of mind and person, should so completely forget what she owed her rank, her husband, and herself, and allow that form to be profaned, and that face regarded, as if, instead of the most divine, it was the most common-place of Nature's works.

In the meantime the Marchioness seemed troubled with none of the feelings which she inspired, but danced with the utmost gayety and unconcern, till she came to Lord Arabin, for, for the first time, she was not dancing with him; and then indeed, whether from a consciousness of being peculiarly watched by the eyes of others, or by his, all her coquettish graces fled; and instead of the high capricious beauty advancing and receding, she was the humble and abashed one, seeking only, in a precipitate meeting with his Lordship, to hide her confusion from himself, and from the world.

This was observed by all, and a nobleman who greatly admired Lady Glenallan, and envied the Earl his power, determined to remark upon it, "Why, Lord Arabin," said he, "Lady Glenallan allowed *you* a very easy conquest, while all of us she compelled to sue long, before we should have the honour of turning her—this is *not* fair."

The Earl laughed and looked at the Marchioness, who was standing near him, but had turned aside to speak to some one; "Lady Glenallan knows," said

he, in what appeared to every one a very dubious affectation of raillery, "how vain resistance is with me!"

"We must call you her conqueror then, my Lord," returned the other, "since she herself admits the title."

"Lady Glenallan," said the Earl, addressing the Marchioness, "may I aspire to that honour?" repeating it.

"Oh, if it makes you happy," returned she, evidently confused, and continuing to talk to the person with whom she had been previously conversing.

"Well, you are a happy man, Lord Arabin!" continued his friend.

"On what account?" inquired the sweet voice of Lord Arabin's sister, as she just then came up to them.

"Oh, on many!" returned the nobleman; "on that of being your brother, Lady Isabel, for one; but just now on that of being styled conqueror to your beautiful friend Lady Glenallan."

"Well, Edward, if you are really invested with that title," said his sister, "do go and try its powers. See if you can prevail on Lady Glenallan to waltz, for really the ladies are all so coy, there is no setting any thing going."

The Earl moved towards Lady Glenallan, and detaching her rather unceremoniously from an old Countess, with whom she had been engaged, whispered his request, which had at first the appearance of startling her, and to which she replied by an expression of fear of Lord Glenallan's displeasure; but the Earl undertaking to procure any pardon for which her looks were to plead, and also intimating a suspicion of the Marquess not being in a state to observe her, the Marchioness made no farther resistance, but led the way in an amusement in which nature and art equally created her to excel.

Lady Isabel's ball continued until a late hour, and effected all that she foresaw it would, the Marchioness being seduced by flattery and admiration into an appearance of guilt, before the existence of crime.

Nothing, however, could be so panegyrised, or so

justly, as the arrangement of Lady Isabel's party altogether, unifying, as it was observed by the Morning papers to do, "Asiatic splendour and European refinement." The refreshments, the attendants, &c. were all in character with the whole, and while the former consisted of every English and Eastern luxury, served up in oriental splendour, the latter attired as slaves, in turbans and vests of gold and silver muslin dazzled the eyes and bewildered the imagination while they administered to the senses, and made the whole scene appear indeed,

"That land of the myrtle, the rose, and the vine,  
Were all, save the spirit of man, is divine."

## CHAPTER XVII.

"Though my many faults deface me,  
Could no other arm be found,  
Than the soft one which embrac'd me,  
To inflict so deep a wound?"—LORD BYRON.

OUR readers, our youthful ones especially, may perhaps imagine that the Count and Countess de Meurville,

"Who in each other clasp'd whatever fair  
High fancy forms, or lavish hearts can wish."

must on earth have found the happiness which others only anticipate hereafter; but this was not altogether the case, and though he adored her and she him, each were to the other a not unfrequent source of uneasiness. Agnes possessed rather the qualities delightful in a mistress, than desirable in a wife; and De Meurville, proud by nature, as suspicious from his acquaintance with the weakness of woman, dreaded any thing like the appearance of levity in her to whose late he

had united his own. Even the innocent vivacity of Agnes, when shared or inspired by any man but himself, he would often thus construe ; and she, wounded that it should be the case, sometimes resented his displeasure, by an appearance of increased gayety and unconcern, and at others reproached him for it by her sighs and by her tears. The former was a line of proceeding at which De Meurville smiled, knowing her inadequacy long to continue it ; but the latter was eloquence he could not resist, and hanging about her, was not happy, till restored to her embrace and forgiveness. In short, so attached were the Count and Countess De Meurville to each other, that it seemed probable the birth of their child would, by inclining her to be more domestic, and leaving him no ground for jealousy, have reconciled them on the only point in which they at present differed ; but this event was fated to be followed by circumstances which interfered to prevent the results that might otherwise have been expected, and sorrow, which had clouded their unmarried, was yet to embitter their married life.

After languishing for weeks between life and death, on the edge of both worlds, the beginning of April found the Countess De Meurville a mother, and her husband enjoying, by her becoming so, a happiness to which he had been for some time past a stranger ; the sight of Agnes's sufferings having caused him such, as nothing short of the idea of becoming a father could in any alleviate but to be that, and to *her* child, was a delightful idea—so delightful, that De Meurville thought he could never do enough for the creature who was to make him so : he watched over while sleeping, he attended her when waking, guarding her from disturbance, anticipating her wishes, supplying her wants ; inspiring her, when equal to enjoying it, with hope ; soothing her, when unable to entertain it, with love ; evincing towards her, in short, a tenderness, which was returned by such unbounded expressions of gratitude on her part, and eternal assurances of being repaid by all he asked, her heart—that, if there were a creature



upon earth on whose affection for him, De Meurville would have staked his salvation, it would have been Agnes. How little then a husband, so loving and beloved, was prepared to discover the object of his idolatry attached to another may be imagined! so little, that De Meurville's first conviction of his wife's being so, almost deprived him of life.

It was about three months after the Countess's confinement, that going one morning into her dressing-room, he was a good deal surprised to find her in earnest and delighted contemplation of a picture, which a single glance at betrayed to be a gentleman, and yet not his own. She threw a hurried look at her attendant, on his entrance, as if to take it from her, but the latter was at the other end of the room, and evidently to hide it, the Countess put it down her bosom. De Meurville saw the action, and was a good deal surprised at it; but she, not imagining he had, continued, after the first slight embarrassment caused by his entering was over, to talk to, and caress him with her usual fondness. Though perhaps he would not exactly have owned he felt suspicious, certainly De Meurville felt dissatisfied at what he had observed, and could not help hoping every moment that his wife would, in some way or other, explain it: she did not, however, and he became thoughtful and pale. Agnes noticed it, and endeavoured, without suspecting, to ascertain the cause: "I am tired, I am fatigued," however, were his only answers to her tender and reiterated interrogations. "Then, Clifford, why will you not remain with me?" said the Countess, as at the end of a few minutes he was rising to leave her. "Oh! I must keep an engagement," replied De Meurville, and before she could remonstrate, he had left her. It was however, as may be imagined, but to reflect on what would be the best method of coming at a knowledge of whom the miniature was of that he had seen with his wife, for to occupy himself, or his thoughts, upon any other subject after what he had beheld, would have been to such a husband as the Count, impossible. Reflection, however, presented no expedient, but the

apparent one of demanding of Agnes herself an explanation ; and with an intention so to do, De Meurville, at the end of an hour, once more bent his steps towards her apartment. The Countess was no longer there, but from her attendant he learnt she had gone to lie down, not feeling herself well.

“Not feeling herself well?” repeated the Count. “Her illness is sudden ; what occasioned it?”

“I don’t know, my Lord,” replied the woman ; “but I think she said your Lordship startled her when you came in.”

“Startled her !” returned he, with such a smile as she had never before seen him wear, when speaking of her Lady—“Startled her !” he continued, and looked as if he could have said more, “Is she undressed ?” at length he added.

“No, my Lord, I only loosened her dress and put aside her ornaments,” replied the woman, pointing carelessly to an half-open drawer.

Immediately the Count started up, and upon some pretext dismissing her, proceeded to examine whether the mysterious picture were laid aside among the rest ; to his infinite surprise it was, but oh what agony was blended with the astonishment ! when, instead of being, as he had fondly deluded himself it would after all turn out to be, the picture of a relation, or of a mutual friend, it was that of a young and handsome man, whom he had occasionally seen indeed, but never since he left Hermitage, and whom, till memory presented at this dreadful moment the recollection of his having been an admirer of Agnes’s, he had totally forgotten. With an involuntary exclamation of horror and contempt at his wife’s perfidy and ingratitude, De Meurville was on the point of rushing into her chamber, but his intention was arrested by the falling of a note, which, attached in some way to the picture, he had not before perceived. “Improvident, as ungrateful creature !” he exclaimed, picking it up, and tearing it open, “she fancied I should not return, and lulled into security by my apparent unsuspicion, has undone herself indeed ! But

you were mistaken, madam !” he continued, glancing at the signature, which was, as he anticipated, Edward Aubrey, and reading as follows. “ Dy dear lovely, irresistible Agnes, you may laugh at your own thralldom but you must not at mine. You may call yourself a nun, sultana, a captive, but not me an enthusiast, a madman, a fool. Remember were I either, I should never have been your lover ! No ! such is not the man who would appreciate you, or aspire to rival your De Meurville ! No ! call me your Aubrey, your Edward, your lover ; those are the titles by which I should desire to be recognised by you, and these are the titles by which I was once ! Ah, my Agnes, your blushing cheeks would fain deny it, but your conscious heart confirms it, was it not by those endearing names you whispered me to leave you, when together in the summer-house before your illness, we neither knew the long farewell we were bidding to happiness ? Yes, my memory more faithful than yours, declares that it was ; and recollection more valuable still, records a desire you then expressed to see my picture. I send it to you now, my ~~charming friend~~, and should before, but as you were not in a state to visit the grotto yourself, and will not admit a confederate to our intercourse, I knew it would but be lying there at hazard of discovery. And now, my Agnes, let me remind you of your promise of meeting me to-morrow night ; surely it is the least you can do for one of whose life you have embittered every other. Should any fears of De Meurville prevent your compliance, remember how easy it is to be warned of his approach ; from a window you can have some one upon any pretext to make a signal, and I promise not a moment to detain you ; for triumphant as would be the capture, it would be at the same time too merciless, and my desire of being a conqueror must not make me forget that De Meurville is a husband. Can I forget it when he is yours ! Farewell, most worshipped of women ! in blessed anticipation of the moment of our meeting I live, and till it arrives, may angels hover over

and protect you. Believe me, as ever, your adoring lover, and admiring friend,

“EDWARD AUBREY.”

The note fell from the Count De Meurville's hands, and so stunning altogether were the sentences communicated within these last few minutes, that without endeavour, or power at resistance, he sunk upon a seat and fainted. It was in this alarming state, that the attendant, whom he had dismissed on a message, presently returned and found him. Completely insensible, he neither spoke, nor moved at her entrance, but lay, his head fallen back, his hands convulsively clasped. She was evidently frightened, and rang and called for assistance. Roused by the confusion from a slumber into which she had fallen, the Countess presently entered, to ascertain the cause, but oh! what words, what expression! can paint her distraction, on sight of De Meurville extended apparently lifeless, on a sofa! She flew to him, she fell upon a seat beside him, and in accents wild and incoherent, demanded what had brought him thus? None around, but Villars, the attendant before alluded to, could give any idea, and she only that he had come in a few minutes before looking very ill, and while she was absent from the room for a few moments, fainted. Like a distracted creature, the Countess assisted in the application of every remedy for the restoration of her beloved husband, raised the dear head, and kissed the downcast eyelids, but all was for a while to no purpose—the one lay senseless on her bosom, the others looked as if they never would rise. At length, and in a sort of sorrowful reluctance, they did—the beautiful eyes were turned upon her, with an expression beyond description agonizing,—all that can be conceived of misery was comprehended in that look. The Countess, unable to understand its cause, leant over him, and with soft endearments seemed endeavouring to ascertain, but he started from her embraces soon as he felt them, and hiding his face in his arms, exclaimed, “Leave me, I would never, never, see you

more !” She was for a moment like one stupified at his words, still more at the action of revolt, which accompanied them, but presently, and as if conceiving she had misinterpreted them and it, she threw her arms around him, and motioning those about the sofa to depart, implored his telling her the occasion of this anguish. He neither moved towards her, nor looked at her, but writhing in her embraces, implored her to leave him—to leave him, he said, ’twas all he asked. Agnes, however, would not be thus repulsed. “What sorrow, De Meurville,” she said, “can be yours which should not also be mine ?” He replied to her for a while but with heart-breaking sighs, presently, however, and in overwhelming emotion, he exclaimed, “Oh ! that I were dead, that I were something devoid of feeling, and of life, that I were where passions could not tear me, nor memory torment me—that I were, where your image would not haunt me, nor your tears deceive me ! Oh ! that I were, that I were !” he said, and literally groaned with agony.

She fell on her knees before him—she implored him for heaven’s sake, for her sake, for his own, to be calm, to have mercy on her.

But he would not be calm, he would not have mercy, he was like a desperate man, throwing her from him, he crossed the room with phrenzied vehemence.

She fell on the ground, her pale features, her dishevelled hair, her uplifted eyes, all likening her appearance to that of a sculptured angel.

De Meurville saw her, and could have wept at the sight, but as if in derision of himself, he smiled, and turning to her asked, “Whether it were thus she had won Sir Edward Aubrey’s heart ?”

Agnes started at the name, but looked for a while in either real or feigned amazement, at her husband. At length, however, and as if a rush of recollections had been produced by his question, she suddenly arose, “Oh ! I see it all, De Meurville,” she exultingly exclaimed, “and can explain it. It was that picture, my love,” she continued, and would have flown to his arms.

But he repulsed her with stern surprise. "Yes, it was that picture," she continued, unmindful of his frowns, "and that picture was of my brother!"

"Miserable deceiving girl," exclaimed the Count, "do you expect to impose thus on me, do you attempt to make me believe that that picture was not of Sir Edward Aubrey?"

"Not as I hope for mercy," murmured Agnes, feeling, as it would seem, for the miniature in her bosom.

"It is not there, you will find it," cried the Count contemptuously, "but in a less soft asylum, madam!" So saying, he took it from the drawer, and holding it for a moment before her dazzled sight, dashed it in a thousand pieces.

Agnes screamed, and terrified apparently at the violence of his manner, as at the discovery which had occasioned it, rushed from the room.

Fearful that she might injure herself, De Meurville was on the point of following her, but pride made him hesitate; and while he was deliberating she again appeared—so wild, so death-like, however, that he literally started from the sight; with her infant clasped to her bosom, her eyes upraised, her hair wet with their tears, she fell at his feet. What an appeal was it to a husband's, and a father's heart! One which De Meurville could not, perhaps, have resisted, had not pride and jealousy been all powerful in his nature; but that they were, she, who yet presumed on his affection, more well knew. After a silence of a few moments, Agnes spoke: "Since you seem solicitous, De Meurville," said she, "to deprive your child of a mother, be to him, I implore you, a father; remember that it was the love which sustained me from dying, caused his existence; by Frederic's mother, you have often watched, and wept, and prayed; and be not to himself less kind, he is the child of her on whom you doted, of your Agnes De Meurville, and you will not behold him without emotion."

"Of her then," said the Count in smothered and agonized accents, "whom, unless I am to doubt the

evidence of my senses, is the most deceiving and ungrateful of human creatures."

"Oh! doubt them," cried Agnes, wildly, "doubt every thing but my love, for every thing you may with better reason: that picture, De Meurville, was as truly my brother's as this child is your own."

"'Tis folly to talk," cried the Count passionately, and trying to release himself from her, but she clung to his feet: "Yet listen to me once more," she cried; "I can bring a witness to prove the truth of what I say—Rosaline saw the picture as well as I."

"You were select in your choice of a confidante, it must be owned," said he bitterly, "but it is in vain, Agnes, I have other proofs," he continued; and averted his face from the imploring, the beseeching expression of hers.

"No, you cannot! you cannot!" screamed she in desperation, "for they do not exist!" and her tears, her agonies, wrung de Meurville's heart. He looked around, partly to conceal his emotion, partly to seek for the note which had caused this miserable scene; but, perceiving it had been removed, remarked with cruel sarcasm, "'Twas a prudent precaution, Agnes."

The eyes of the Countess, which had followed his as if to discover the object of their pursuit, were now expressive of such real, or feigned ignorance of his meaning, as to require some further explanation of it.

"It was a prudent precaution, I mean," he said, "to remove Sir Edward's note, and only unfortunate that it was not taken sooner."

"What note of Sir Edward's?" said the Countess, "I saw but one note, and that—" she was beginning, when some recollection seemed to impede her utterance: "'Tis of no consequence, however," she presently added, rising in a sort of desperate calmness from his feet; "you have made accusations against me, De Meurville, without one proof in justification of them; you have doubted my innocence, notwithstanding my strongest asseverations of it; and I now only ask, by what means it is to be proved? or am I to re-

main under the imputation of being such a creature as it is contamination to be connected with?"

"Till you can satisfactorily prove I have lost the power of seeing, Madam," returned the Count haughtily, and without further comment.

"It might be less difficult than you seem to imagine," sighed Agnes, looking down at her child; "when we regard things through the medium of prejudice or pride, we seldom see aright."

"I see things neither through the influence of prejudice or pride," cried the Count passionately, "but simply as they are, and they drive me to distraction. I see you, Agnes, regarding in raptures another man's picture, and then attempting to persuade me it is your brother's. I find in your apartment a note from this same chevalier; and then hear you deny all knowledge or suspicion of it: by heaven! I will know the truth. Where is the note concealed, Madam, which lay on the ground when first you came into this room?"

"I cannot tell," replied the Countess, "I saw nothing but you:" and in her answer, short as it was, there was a something which went to De Meurville's heart. Considering it however evasive, he rang the bell, and inquired of Villars, who answered it, "Whether she had seen a note?" evidently confused, the woman did not immediately reply; but, glancing at her Lady, seemed desirous of a signal from her, as to what she should say; the latter, however, took no notice, till the woman was on the point of confessing the truth, and then with a scream she exclaimed, "Oh! do not say I saw it—do not say I saw it—I will never accuse him."

This was enough. De Meurville motioned the attendant to depart, and then clasping his hands on his forehead, exclaimed, "Preserve me my senses! Preserve me my senses! If there were in the world a creature whom I believed unsullied, Agnes, it was you! if there were one whom I worshipped, it was you! and, oh! to believe you lost, and know you ungrateful! What a belief! What a conviction!"

To judge from De Meurville's agonies, the most



dreadful that could be entertained, he seemed literally in a state of frenzy. Again the Countess flew to him, implored him by her looks, her tears, her entreaties, her despair, to be not thus infatuated: "You know, you must know, De Meurville," said she, "that it was out of regard to your feelings I would have disclaimed all knowledge of the note, and it is cruel in you, by indulging an unjust surmise with regard to the picture, to show so little for mine!"

"In what your feelings may consist," returned he contemptuously, "I own myself at a loss to conceive; but that you have wounded mine, beyond what any attempts at self-deception can cure, I feel! I know!—Perhaps, however," he presently continued, "I was too little prepared for this event, because I loved you too much; I might have been led into the error of believing you the most amiable of women, only because you were to me the dearest!"

"No, no, I never could have been," exclaimed the Countess, "or you would not have the heart to treat me thus cruelly; you could not see the form, and hear the voice, which you had ever loved, in such misery as you have witnessed me! No, De Meurville, you could not!" she continued, and yet held to her lips, and drenched with her tears, the hand of him who was inflicting all her woes.

De Meurville could not look at her, dare not speak to her; one look would have been love, one word forgiveness! He felt the soft arms that were twining about him, he heard the lisp of his first-born! and rushed from the room.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"Still woman draws new power, new empire still,  
From every blessing, and from every ill :  
Vice on her bosom lulls remorseless care,  
And virtue hopes congenial virtue there."

WHILST Lady Glenallan retained her virtue, amidst every temptation to its corruption, she inspired a respect which not all her pride and passion could entirely obliterate ; for to find her the most unamiable, when nature had formed her the most beautiful of women, was only what might be expected. But deprived of that solitary claim to admiration, she appears indeed divested of every thing which imparted interest to her character, or dignity to her person : and it is thus, unfortunately, that we must now present her to our readers : for Lord Arabin, Lady Glenallan had sacrificed, if not her husband and her home, at least her conscience and her happiness : and how inadequate was the return she was to receive for such sacrifices, is yet to be seen.

On the evening after Lady Isabella Wandesmere's ball, when from the dissipation of the preceding night, the Marchioness felt ill and languid, a note was brought her from the former ; it was in her usual romantic strain :—

"A night of festivity has been succeeded by a morning of wo—you will sympathize with me, Lady Glenallan, when you learn that it had Edward for its source. Immediately after our company separated, he met in single combat a gentleman who had insulted him, by suspecting the character of a person he valued : neither party, however, suffered mortally ; my brother, indeed, principally from loss of blood, which weakened him so extremely, as to render his appearance alarmingly languid when I beheld it this morning. Since

then, however, he has continued to revive, and is now, I think, only in want of rest and quiet, which, with such a nurse as your Isabel, there is little fear of his not obtaining. Believe me, as ever,

“Your truly attached

“ISABELLA WANDESMERE.”

Lady Glenallan's feeling the strongest affection for Lord Arabin was not necessary to interest her in his fate ; for, besides the idea she could not but entertain of it having been on her account he fought, the Earl was a man calculated to excite interest in any female heart. Immediately on receiving Lady Isabel's note, the Marchioness began answering it, and expressing the sorrow which its contents occasioned her. “But tell me, my Isabel,” she ended by saying, “who is this enviable object in whose cause your brother engaged ? If she were once the happiest, she must be now the vainest of women.” Little did Lady Glenallan imagine, while writing this, that if there was any room for vanity or happiness, it was not in her bosom, at least as far as related to Lord Arabin ; and that the real cause of his engaging in a duel, was the following : Some time before his acquaintance with the Marchioness, he had fallen in love with a young lady, who to all the beauty added all the sweetness of an angel, and to whom, if at the expiration of two years there appeared nothing objectionable on his side, he was to have been united.

This time had just elapsed, and about a fortnight before Lady Isabel's ball, the lady, who with her family had been residing on the continent, returned to England. Nothing could be more gratifying than the meeting of the Earl, more lovely than the appearance of his affianced bride. He implored the naming of an immediate day for their union, and she, unable any longer to resist his importunities, promised the first of the following month ; but, in the mean time, a report came to her brother's ears, of the acquaintance of his Lordship with Lady Glenallan, and he, indignant to the last degree, determined to watch well the conduct of

the Earl, before he ever again admitted him to the presence of his sister. An opportunity immediately occurred for his doing so, and at Lady Isabel's ball, to which, he went masked, as some were permitted, he saw the confirmation of all he had heard : saw first Lord Arabin flirting, talking, dancing, with the Marchioness, in a manner which, whether considering her as a married woman, or he as a betrothed husband, was highly incorrect, and afterward, at a late hour, putting her into a carriage in which her senseless Lord had been already placed. This was enough for Lord Lynmere ! he darted upon the Earl, upbraided him with his perfidy, and as the brother of Lady Catharine Delmore, demanded satisfaction. Too proud to make the slightest explanation, Lord Arabin immediately followed him out ; and Lady Isabel, when her brother was brought home alive, saw the confirmation of all her wishes. He escaped from the duel, separated from Lady Catharine, and with all the reputation of an intrigue with Lady Glenallan. It was the denouement for which she had long panted, the happy result which she had anticipated, when maintaining a series of artifice.

But no such gratification had the Earl ; he cursed the vanity which had lost him the woman he loved, by inducing him to affect a triumph over one to whom he was indifferent, or for whom at least he felt a passion so inferior to that which Lady Catharine had inspired, as to bear no comparison with it. In despair, he, at the end of a few days, addressed a letter to the latter, adjuring her by every fond and cherished remembrance, not to condemn him unheard, not to renounce him for ever, but to remember that it would be her Edward whom she would condemn, her once affianced husband whom she would resign ! Need the beloved mistress of Lord Arabin to be reminded of all she would have to forego in losing him ! Ah no, it was present when sleeping, it was remembered when waking ! it was an idea which could never be absent but with life. Lady Catharine, however, was spared the receiving these reminiscences from her lover's hand, for Lady Isabel,

to whom the Earl, being confined to bed himself, had intrusted the sending of his letter, took very good care that it never should go. At the same time performing her part so skilfully, that when, at the expiration of an hour, she brought it back to her brother in a cover, and with the seal broken, he really believed that it was thus Lady Catharine had returned it, and that after reading a letter which he had written in agony of mind and body, she could continue unaffected, she could remain unsubdued.

Who, indeed, could have entertained a different idea, when they beheld Lady Isabel, saw her apparently overwhelming grief, heard her apparently true narration? None that were not by nature or necessity suspicious, and the Earl, not the one, had not yet discovered that he ought to be the other. Lady Isabel, said, that after having given the letter as her brother desired to his valet, the latter had taken it to Delmore house, and through a female servant of his acquaintance got it conveyed to Lady Catharine, who only detained it a few minutes, and then returned it as has been seen; but with an accompanying message, which, out of consideration for her brother's feelings, Lady Isabel had not hitherto mentioned: namely, "That she requested to have no farther correspondence." What a communication was this for a lover, and for the lover of Catharine!

At first Lord Arabin sunk under it, and all his pride was unequal to subduing his love; but soon the former gained ascendancy, and when a report reached his ears of her being about to be married, it reigned alone. How unfounded was this rumour, circulated by Lady Isabel, may be imagined; but its being in reality so, made no difference to the Earl, and believing it true, he suffered all the mortification that such news was calculated to inflict. Indignant at having been rejected upon the mere suspicion of a gallantry, he foolishly determined at least to justify it; and when his strength was sufficiently recovered, which it was not till nearly a month after the duel; proposed to his sister that besides them-

selves and General Wandesmere, who had already settled to go, they should invite Lord and Lady Glenallan to join them on a tour to the continent. This was the ultimatum of Isabel's ambition, aware as she was, that it would annihilate any doubts which might yet be entertained as to Lady Glenallan's guilt, and create such an irremediable breach between the houses of Arabin and Delmore, as would render any future union between them impossible. No proposition could delight Lady Isabel so much, and scarce was it made, before she had offered to be an ambassadress for its execution; but suddenly recollecting herself, and with adroit flattery, she cried: "Ah, Edward, there *are* lips that would be more seductive than your sister's, and you must come and add your eloquence to mine, or rather let it precede it," said she, "for you will be for walking and I for the carriage, so by the time you are there I shall be only ready to set out." The Earl agreed, and anxious to behold Lady Glenallan, who he had not seen since his illness, went to Grosvenor Square. It was a beautiful afternoon, but to Lord Arabin, passing on to an object more beautiful still, it was unheeded, and all the loveliness of the latter occupied his imagination. In fact, Lady Glenallan had gained in his affections what Lady Catharine had lost; and that she who seemed willing to renounce her character, consequence, heaven, for him, must love him better than the one who would not even endanger them, he was certain. Upon arriving at the house, Lord Arabin was shown into the library, and no one being there he took up a book to beguile the time. But from this his eyes were involuntarily attracted by a picture of Lady Glenallan which hung over the chimney-piece, and which, representing her caressing her child, was the most enchanting he had ever seen. Nothing but the entrance of the Marchioness could have withdrawn his attention, and that only rivetted it on the original. Never had Lady Glenallan looked so lovely as in that hour, so calculated to inspire love, so formed apparently to feel it; Lord Arabin himself, too, looked most highly interesting, and though the pallid hues of

sickness still too much predominated to give an idea of health they did not prevent his inspiring in the Marchioness's bosom sentiments more dangerous, perhaps, than any he had ever yet inspired. Extending towards her the only arm he could command, for one was in a sling, the Earl, rather by looks than words, expressed the joy he felt at again seeing her. Nor were Lady Glenallan's lips for the first few moments much more eloquent ; but the joy each felt at seeing again the other, soon furnished them with language to express it ; and from the Marchioness's description of the anxiety she had sustained during his indisposition, and the Earl's of the unhappiness it had caused him by occasioning so long a separation from her, they began to talk of the original cause of the misfortune.

Lord Arabin spoke of Lady Catharine as one to whom he had once been attached, but from whom he was not sorry to be free ; of the duel, as having been occasioned by Lord Lynmere's speaking disrespectfully of the Marchioness ; and of his own illness afterward, as being more the result of anxiety than of the wounds he had received.

While Lady Glenallan, who perceived that he softened every thing to spare her feelings, exclaimed, " Ah ! my Lord, what can I ever do to recompense you for all your sufferings."

" You have more than recompensed them, Lady Glenallan," said he, " by commiserating them ; and I conceive the having my name associated with yours, in itself a reward and honour."

" A very inadequate one, Lord Arabin," returned the Marchioness ; " and one I suspect," she added, between something of a smile and a blush, " you have long enjoyed."

Lord Arabin looked like the noblest of men ; and the silence of a moment ensued, but presently he told her he was almost come to plead for a continuance of that honour ; and acquainted her with the plan which he and Lady Isabel had formed of travelling on the continent, and requesting her and Lord Glenallan to

join them. The Marchioness assented, and they were talking and making arrangements for it, and she hoping that the Marquess would suggest no obstacle, when they were interrupted by Lady Isabel's footman shaking the house with a sort of earthly thunder; and Lord Arabin, recalled to a recollection of the time he had spent with the Marchioness, as well as of an engagement he ought to have been fulfilling, started up.

"I go, my fair one," he cried, extending his hand, "and leave you to finish arrangements with one more likely to influence them, as, I fear, every thing else."

"Ah! no," said she, detaining, for a moment, his hand in her's, "you know that creature does not exist."

"Not even in Isabel?" returned he, smiling.

"No, not even in her!" replied the Marchioness; "for Isabel, lovely as she is, derives to *me* half her attractions from being your sister."

"Unworthy distinction!" exclaimed Lord Arabin, with a sigh; but the Marchioness never thought it so enviable a one as at that moment; and when Lady Isabel entered, which she did as her brother went out, proved, by her manner, that she had not forgot her possessing it. The latter was dressed in half mourning, a favourite costume, and emblematic at once of her character and of her beauty. The former, all black and white—all lights and shades—the latter :

"Dusky, like night; but night, with all her stars,  
Or cavern sparkling, in its native spars."

"I come," cried the Lady, "to sign settlements, hoping that my brother has settled preliminaries; to express gratitude for what, I trust, he has ensured."

"Your brother is very eloquent," said Lady Glenallan, "and must gain any point he attempts to carry."

"I hope I am to understand then," said Lady Isabel, "that he has made a convert of *you*."

"If there were any room for conversion, certainly," replied the Marchioness; "but, to tell you the truth, I am so sick of the monotony of my life, that I would go to America to free myself from it."



"Much more then to fair France," cried Lady Isabel, "where variety will court us in every shape, and Pleasure be the presiding deity of our worship."

"Yes, and to Italy too," replied the Marchioness; "but let us, Isabel, arrange our plans. Your brother wanted to persuade me to depart next week; but I told him I must hold a cabinet-council with you before I promised."

"And so best," returned the Lady; "but to prevent its interruption, suppose we retire to your boudoir."

The Marchioness assented, and the ladies adjourned.

By that day month the whole party, consisting of Lord and Lady Glenallan, General and Lady Isabella Wandesmere, were become residents at Paris; and the fashionable world in London left to construe, as they chose, their conduct; but, before that period, Lady Glenallan had unfortunately justified the worst construction that could be put upon it.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

"The village maids with fearful glance,  
Avoid the ivy moss-grown wall;  
Nor ever lead the merry dance  
Among the groves of Cumnor-hall.  
And many a traveller has sigh'd,  
And pensive mourn'd that lady's fall,  
As journeying on he espied  
The haunted towers of Cumnor-hall."

ABOUT the beginning of the month of July, circumstances took Mrs. Damer into Northumberland. She had had some property left there by a relation, which it was necessary that she or Mr. Damer should go to see; and he, being occupied with business, consigned the task to her. As the part of the county in which this property lay was not far from where Lady Ossulton

resided, Mrs. Damer thought she could not well avoid going to see the Countess; and therefore, on her way back, stopped at Ossulton. It was a beautiful afternoon on which she entered its gloomy grounds, which seemed contrived by nature and art to exclude every idea of sunshine; where summer, which over every other scene threw an air of cheerfulness and joy, communicated but a still-life loveliness the most depressing. This was occasioned by a too great preponderance of shade, and total absence of animated nature, which is ever necessary to the elasticity of scenery.

The house was in character with the whole; a high, gloomy, gray building, looking like a monastic pile, and conveying any sensations but those of pleasure. The door was opened by an elderly footman, and several servants appeared in the hall with an ostentatious parade, at which Mrs. Damer smiled. In passing up stairs she saw, through one of the high windows, Lady Ossulton walking in the garden; and the dejected air which characterized her appearance, she then attributed to extreme grief for the loss of her mother, who had died about two months ago. But none, to see the Countess when she entered the drawing-room, could doubt that she had other sources of woe. There was over her whole figure an expression so mournful, that no language can paint, but such as was calculated to overcome the beholder. Not one trace of human colouring brightened her cheeks—not one ray of animation illumined her dark melancholy eyes. It was such a countenance as Mary might have worn in the solitudes of Fotheringay, or Magdalen at the feet of Christ; and yet, notwithstanding her appearance, she evidently made efforts to impress, by her manner, an idea of her still being an object of envy. How unsuccessfully, when not only herself, but every thing around, contradicted the possibility of her being so, may be imagined; for the very room in which they were was the emblem of desolation. Furnished with a quantity of old furniture, it presented indeed a most lively contrast to that in which Mrs. Damer had first beheld Lady

Ossulton, where all the enjoyments of luxurious, were blended with all the elegancies of refined, life. It was after an ineffectual attempt on the part of the Countess to inspire sentiments which every thing prevented her from doing, that she suddenly exclaimed: "How many happy days, Caroline, have you and I spent at Hermitage!"

Mrs. Damer was silent, for those days were, in her memory, connected with every thing that was mortifying.

"Were not you happy then?" demanded her Ladyship, with a smile, which showed that the malignant spirit of Miss Mandeville was not extinct in the bosom of the dying Countess of Ossulton.

But Mrs. Damer, no longer the blushing trembling girl sinking beneath the glance of her triumphant friend, did not affect to observe this look, and carelessly answered, "I am now, you know, a mother, and must consequently be happier than I was then."

"How matronly," said the Countess, contemptuously, as she laid her hand on the bell, to ring for refreshments; but Mrs. Damer, anticipating her design, prevented it—and disgusted with such heartlessness in a creature so wretched, walked towards one of the windows, to conceal what she felt. Struck with beauties in the grounds, which she had not observed before, and thinking that the Countess deserved, in her turn, some such observation as she had herself made, Mrs. Damer could not forbear exclaiming, "Well, Lady Ossulton, you must have attained the summit of your wishes in being mistress of such a place as this castle, and the grounds about it, they have all that solemn grandeur which you used so much to admire—Surely you must be happy now!"

"Happy!" said the Countess, slowly advancing toward the window, "no, nothing connected with Lord Ossulton can be happy."

Mrs. Damer looked surprised.

"You are astonished, Caroline, but your astonishment will increase, when I tell you that, more than not

Being happy, I am wretched, wretched beyond imagination ; beyond what I once thought possibility ! Those woods, those lawns, convey no more joy to my heart, than would the sands of a desert, or the weeds of a wilderness !”

“ Oh, Lady Ossulton,” said Mrs. Damer, “ can you hear the warbling of those birds, the falling of those waterfalls, without delight, without enjoying some moments of pleasure ?”

“ I have listened,” replied the Countess, “ to the singing of those birds, and to the falling of those waterfalls, in some of the most miserable moments of my life, when stretched on the bed of suffering ; and, as I have oftentimes believed, of death—judge then, whether I have reason to delight in their sounds !”

Mrs. Damer scarce knew how to reply, so strangely was the manner of Lady Ossulton contrasted to what it had been a few minutes before, and so deep the dejection which fell over her countenance at the mention of what had been. Silence was, however, distressing, and Mrs. Damer ventured to observe, that she had heard of her being in ill health, but being abroad at the time, had not been able to gain that minute information she would have wished.

“ You were in France, were you not ?” asked Lady Ossulton, with an air of vacant interest.

“ Yes,” returned Mrs. Damer ; “ Charles and I took a very delightful tour.”

“ You and Charles !” repeated the Countess, “ how often have I laughed at the sentiment with which you pronounced that ; and now how I envy you for being so happily able to unite your enjoyments with his. Yes, Caroline,” continued she, “ I have been schooled in affliction, which has taught me to appreciate real happiness, and to despise fictitious sorrows. To you, who have known me in happier hours, some lurking, lingering vanity made me at first wish to appear different from the wretched creature I really am ; but I could not. I throw off the mask now and for ever, content to be pitied by those by whom I was once envied.”

Mrs. Damer entreated her not to talk in a manner so desponding, assured her she was nervous ; that secluded in scenes where every thing reminded her of past sufferings, she had allowed her mind to dwell upon them, in a manner unfavourable to her spirits.

"I have gone through sufferings both of mind and body," returned the Countess, with an air of melancholy resignation, "which, if not greater than ever woman lived to endure, or existed to record, were at least greater than she ever long survived. In a solitary chamber in this castle, with no attendant but an unfeeling, mercenary woman ; no visiter, but a husband who came occasionally, as a jailer might, to see if his prisoner were safe, I have passed days of agony, and nights of despair. Sometimes deprived of food to sustain me, by the carelessness of those around me, and the parsimony of my lord ; but more frequently, and more mercifully, of the reason which maddened me."

Mrs. Damer, overcome with emotion, burst into tears.

"Caroline, you must not shed tears for me !" said Lady Ossulton, throwing her wasted arms around her neck, "time was, when I exulted in yours."

"How can I help it ?" exclaimed Mrs. Damer.

"How can I ever remember the past, after beholding the present ?"

"If," continued the Countess, "even the description of what I have gone through affects you so much, what would a sight of the reality ? Could you have heard my Lord abusing my parents to my face ; cursing the day, the hour, in which they had first inveigled him to marry me—for that they had done so, he scrupled not to tell me, and that I was accessory to it—and then, Oh barbarous man ! scarce had I become a mother, when I heard him curse the sex of my child !—that child for whom I had suffered so much."

"Is your child living ?" eagerly interrupted Mrs. Damer.

The Countess shook her head mournfully, and continued : "I am the nominal mistress of servants over

whom I have no control. They declare that while they are fed like dogs, they will not be worked like horses; and what am I to reply? My Lord, content to see a large number of domestics about his house (because it gratifies his love of show,) regards not my convenience or his own. The like miserable parsimony pervades every thing in this establishment. I see the same solitary dish brought to table till I sicken at the sight of it; and still more at the cold, unfeeling tone in which Lord Ossulton sometimes observes, that it is very extraordinary there is never any thing I can eat."

"Really, if I were in your situation," said Mrs. Damer, "I should be tempted to do something desperate. I'd write to my friends, I'd threaten to leave him; I would, in short, demand my rights as a woman, if I could not obtain them as a wife."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Countess, "I have enough of my former self in my composition not to put up quietly with such usage if I had any resource, but I have no friends; my father and mother are dead; not one of my brothers would do any thing were I to appeal to them, they are all taken up too much with their own concerns; and were I to leave my Lord, whither should I go? what should I do? I had no fortune of my own, and none was settled on me at my marriage. My poor parents thought little of settlements when the prospect of their daughter being Countess, was in view. We caught at the shadow, and lost the substance."

Mrs. Damer heaved a deep sigh, and Lady Ossulton, as if wishing to change the subject, inquired whether she had seen or heard any thing of Lady Glenallan lately; "the beautiful Lady Glenallan!" added the Countess, with a faint smile.

Mrs. Damer had only heard what were the *on dits* of the world; and that her Ladyship, with the Marquess and Lord Arabin, was travelling abroad.

"What a lovely creature she was!" observed the Countess, with recollections that recalled brighter moments.

"Beyond any thing I ever saw!" returned Mrs. Damer.

As it was growing late and she had some distance to go, the latter begged leave to ring for her carriage, and with no remonstrance on the part of Lady Ossulton, out of whose power perhaps it was to urge her remaining, prepared to take leave. Both were much affected in doing so, thinking it probable that they would never meet again in this world. And the shadowy form of the Countess, as she stood on the stair-case, at Mrs. Damer's departure, haunted the mind of that lady, long after it had ceased to meet her eyes.

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## CHAPTER XX.

"From you, I am wild, despairing,  
With you, speechless, as my touch,  
This is all, that bears declaring,  
And perhaps declares too much."

WHEN the Count De Meurville left Agnes, as we related he did in a preceding chapter, it was in a state bordering on frenzy, and without any exact resolution as to where he should go, or for how long; but calmer reflection determined him on separating himself from her, until the time should be passed in which her appointment with Sir Edward was to be kept, and, by being himself on the spot where it was to be held, judge whether she kept it or not. That she would not, under the impression she must at present entertain, of his being prepared to intercept it, De Meurville perfectly foresaw, and therefore wrote her a few lines, saying he had made up his mind on what he had hitherto been doubtful, and should set out with the Emperor on his tour, which was to commence next morning. In asserting this, De Meurville did not depart from truth, for it was his intention so to do, though it was also, to return in the evening, and by witnessing what were Agnes's

proceedings, in his supposed absence, accordingly determine to prolong it or not.

Contrary to his expectation, she proceeded at the hour of appointment to fulfil her engagement; and De Meurville would have had the grief, the agony of seeing the wife of his bosom clasped to the heart of another, had she not, in the very moment of being about to be so, been warned apparently by a signal from the window immediately to retreat, for swift as lightning the lovers in a moment separated; and Agnes was flying towards the house, when she was met, to her horror and dismay, by her infuriated husband. Discerning in a moment from his countenance that he had seen the whole transaction, she caught his arm, and with a scream, exclaimed, "Do nothing rashly, I conjure you! It is, as I hope to live, my brother, whom you see."

"Your brother!" repeated the Count, in profound contempt, for he had caught glimpse enough of the stranger to be convinced it was not, "how do you dare such an assertion, Agnes? But whoever the wretch is," he continued, drawing his sword, "I will pursue him! I will pursue him to the remotest corner of the earth!"

"Have mercy! have mercy!" cried the Countess, and fell at his feet. Regardless De Meurville rushed forward. "Have mercy!" he repeated, "yes, just such as he showed me!"

The Countess screamed, and continued for a while to follow him, but finding the attempt to come up with him hopeless, she turned, and exerting all her strength, ran towards the house, calling for assistance. Attracted by her screams, several servants rushed out to see what was the cause, and by signs Agnes endeavoured to make them understand, for all powers of articulate expression were denied her in that moment. They pursued the direction towards which she pointed, and Agnes, unequal to await in a state of inaction the result, wandered herself once more down the same path.

Several hours elapsed, and nothing was heard of the Count or of the servants who had gone in pursuit of him; at length the latter returned; they had overtaken their



master, and pursued with him for some time the person of whom he was in quest, but finding the attempt to trace him hopeless, the Count had insisted on their returning, and taking to horse, set out himself in some other direction. The hitherto ill success of De Meurville's expedition seemed to give consolation to the Countess, and (whether it was for her lover's or her husband's safety she felt most desirous) she expressed a fervent hope that it might continue.

Two months, two miserable months, to judge from the situation which the end of them found the Countess De Meurville reduced to, elapsed, and she heard nothing of the Count. At the expiration of that time there came one morning a note; it was from the latter, and as follows:—"Being quite unable to trace the wretch who, in engaging your affections, has for ever destroyed my happiness, I shall this evening, Agnes, return. That you have not allowed your health to suffer during my absence is my most earnest hope, for however doubtful you may be of it, nothing has prevented my writing to adjure you to guard it, but a conviction that my wishes would be the least influencing motive by which I could implore you. Farewell."

Agnes was in bed when this note arrived, to which, indeed, she had been confined ever since the departure of the Count, and the sensations it produced were of a mingled description, though joy visibly predominated; for whether her heart had been led astray by another or not, it still evidently doted on De Meurville. She made an attempt to rise, previous to his arrival, not wishing to give him the shock which, she knew, finding her in bed would; but quite unequal to the effort, she was compelled to remain where she was, endeavouring, apparently by the adjustment of her hair and arrangement of her dress, to prove nothing connected with his most trifling tastes had been forgotten. Unhappy Agnes! what pains did she not take to re-win the heart, which nothing less than insatiation, one would think, would ever have induced her to risk the loss! However, the

moment at length arrived, so ardently desired, so often imagined, so long deferred, and with a sensation bordering on transport. Agnes once more heard the voice of her beloved husband. He approached her room, and, according to her custom on former occasions, Agnes was on the point of getting up, and flying to meet him, but the sudden weakness, as well as sudden fear which overcame her, reminded her, that the past and the present were no longer the same: that they were, indeed, widely different, the very manner in which, at the end of a few moments, De Meurville entered her room, convinced her. It was no longer the happy and delighted husband rushing to her arms, and forgetting in the joys of reunion all the sorrows of separation, but the calm and collected one, remembering too well the cause of the latter, to exult in the former. He expressed grief, indeed, at the situation in which he found her, but none but a savage could have done less; and when he put his arms about her, it was with a restraint and joylessness so apparent, that Agnes burst into tears.

"Is it thus you receive me?" asked De Meurville, as, with her arms faintly returning the embraces of his, he leant over her. "Is it thus?" he continued, and looked as he would read her very heart.

By tears and sighs she alone replied.

"Oh! Agnes," said he, "if you knew the restless nights, the joyless mornings, the long and tedious days I have passed since last we were together, you would have pity on me, and not, by indulging emotion such as this, renew all my sufferings. I had hoped to find in your society peace, though I can never again happiness; and by giving up to such conduct as this, you are distracting me. The Countess heard him, indeed, but it was in a state of mute and overwhelming agony. That he should have been able to form an idea of living in tranquillity with her, who, once so necessary to his happiness, was never more to have the power of contributing to it, proved him, to her imagination, to have brought his mind to a state of indifference, which almost drove her to frenzy.

She wept till her sobs became convulsive, and could not for a while speak ; at length, and in an almost inarticulate voice, she said,

“ Peace, De Meurville, you must seek upon the bosom in which it is still an inmate, not on that from which it is fled for ever !”

“ You shall not say so,” said he, his manners softened, though not changed, from the serious description which he had evidently resolved on their ever more being towards her. “ You shall not say so, Agnes !” he continued ; “ because I am unhappy, it does not follow that you must be. We will visit other scenes, we will endeavour to derive from them what we can no longer derive from each other ; the sight of England, perhaps,” and he faintly smiled, “ would have power to restore your lost spirits.”

The Countess regarded him with a look of fixed and mournful reproach. “ Vainly, De Meurville,” said she, “ would you endeavour to separate the idea of happiness and yourself, or imagine that mine can ever flow from any other source than the possession of your affections. To me they are the only things valuable, desirable, or important, and deprived of them, I no longer wish to live. Once,” she continued, after a short pause, “ to have visited England, and in company with you, would have been the highest of all my gratifications, but now —” a sigh, a deep drawn sigh, betrayed what she could not add.

De Meurville pitied her, but he pitied himself also. He knew not what to do with either. “ That you should place your happiness so completely, Agnes,” at length he said, “ upon possessing an entire share of my affections, seems to me unfortunate as extraordinary—extraordinary, because you voluntarily risked their loss—unfortunate, because to the degree you desire you can never again possess them. You are ruining your health, wasting your spirits, destroying that peace—”

“ Which you by such language can never restore !” interrupted the Countess.

A silence ensued for some moments. Agnes was the

first to speak. "Did I not entertain a perfect conviction, De Meurville," said she, "that the time must shortly come in which something will serve to convince you of the injustice you are doing me by your suspicions, I do not imagine that I could live ; for to have so suddenly, so cruelly, so unjustly, torn from me, the affection on which I relied, the esteem on which I prided myself, would be sufficient to break a heart less susceptible than mine. Oh ! De Meurville, when I think how I have loved you, and how little I have done to forfeit your love, of what we are, and what we have been to each other, I wonder I can preserve my senses !"

De Meurville, who had had his countenance rivetted on hers, now averted it, and she, imagining it was in weariness, said, "To revive in the first moments of our meeting the subject which occasioned our parting, may seem melancholy and unkind, but it is the only one which occupies me—the only one which night and day pursues me, and therefore the natural one on which for me to speak."

"It rather distresses than wearies me," returned her husband, with a sigh, "for it is evermore the subject of my own meditations ; but if you would oblige me, Agnes, it would be by letting it be at rest between us for ever. Where is Frederic ?" he inquired, after a short pause, and alluding to their child.

The Countess replied but by ringing the bell—she could not speak. Villars entered, and with the child in her arms. The sight of the latter, who, rather more than six months old, was indeed beautiful beyond description, roused in the bosom of the father all those sensations which seemed dormant in that of the husband, and, dismissing the nurse, De Meurville continued to play and fondle with his child, till compelled to absent himself by unavoidable business.

Left once more to the solitude which her husband's coming in had for a while interrupted, Agnes appeared, if possible, more wretched than before ; and though it is difficult to say in what manner she would have had him to meet her, she seemed to think any way would

have been better than the way in which he had. Had he returned yielding involuntarily to all his former tenderness, perhaps she thought she would have found no difficulty in persuading him he had done her injustice in ever withholding it; or had he returned angry and reproachful, she might imagine it would have lessened the poignancy of her own self-upbraidings; but, as it was, she dared no more allude to the unhappy source of their differences, and De Meurville acted like a man who had formed the magnanimous resolution of forgetting what he could never forgive.

Endeavouring at a reserve, which the excess of the passion they bore each other, rendered it always difficult, and sometimes impossible to sustain, did the Count and Countess De Meurville for many weeks continue, but it was undermining his health, and destroying hers. Often, and as in mercy to their sufferings, they would throw themselves into each other's arms, deriving from an indulgence, which, each believing the other what they did, they could not but despise themselves for resorting to, a temporary relief from their misery; to Agnes, indeed, it was even less, for so immediately was it followed by redoubled anguish, as to be rather her resource from desperation, than her choice from supportable woe. De Meurville, reserved and indifferent, it was difficult enough to withstand; but De Meurville, caressing and fond, it was little less than maddening to be one moment allowed to enjoy, and the next compelled to resign. Yet to such a necessity, did he for ever compel the unhappy Agnes, not from an intentional cruelty indeed, but from the struggle which pride and love occasioned in his bosom, constantly causing the former to chill the latter. Never did De Meurville throw his arms about his wife, or indulge in an expression of tenderness towards her, but it was followed with such a sigh of regret, and effort at indifference, as to drown her in tears, and thereby half distract him. Upon her side, Agnes never saw a frown of discontent upon her husband's brow, nor an expression of displeasure in his countenance, but she fancied herself the cause of it,

and thus created a perpetual source of wo. He was reading to her one evening an English novel, when the following passage occurred : " It might have been imagined that Cecilia would have found in the society of a beloved husband, all that was necessary to her happiness, but that she did not, he was, to his misfortune, yet to feel." Whether intentionally or the contrary, De Meurville raised his eyes to those of Agnes, after reading these words, and conceiving it the former, her's in a moment filled with tears. From a fear of increasing them, De Meurville did not immediately affect to take any notice, but presently they began to fall in such profusion, that laying aside the book, he asked her, what was the matter ? It was so completely in his own sweet accents, that Agnes threw her arms around him. " I weep to think," said she, " that you should apply that sentence to her, to whom, of all others upon earth, it is least applicable."

" And how do you know I did ?" asked De Meurville, faintly smiling.

" Your eyes were my translators of your thoughts, I needed none more true."

" I wish that yours were similarly betraying," exclaimed the Count, with a sigh.

" It would be unavailing, De Meurville, when you doubt the language of my lips, you would not be likely to believe that of my eyes."

" Oh yes, they once taught me, Agnes, what the others would have left me in ignorance of for ever," and De Meurville looked as he spoke, lovely as in the hour in which he had drawn from her the sweet confession of her love.

Sighing at the recollections his looks and words produced ; she said, " Would you again rely then on what you must now believe to have been so deceitful ?"

" More than upon any thing else in the world," replied De Meurville ; " for that your eyes did not deceive me then, however they might, if they spoke a similar language now, I am convinced. Yes : you once loved me, Agnes, and it would not have been all my

faults, (for those you were prepared to meet with, when you loved a fellow-creature,) but some vile influence alone that could have deprived me of your love."

"You talk of faults, De Meurville, which I never discovered, and of influence which I never knew."

The Count shook his head in token of sorrowful disbelief.

"I would," said Agnes, "I would that by the renunciation of all in this world I value, I could convince you of my innocence."

"Answer me one question solemnly," demanded the Count, and was about to propose it, when Villars rushed in with a letter in her hand. Surprised, however, and confused at the sight of her master, whom, it was evident, she had not believed to be there, the woman's retreat was as instantaneous as had been her entry; but De Meurville, grown suspicious by recent events, immediately followed her, demanding what letter it was she was bringing to the Countess? Villars hesitated, and attempted to conceal it; but De Meurville, impetuous from nature, and irritated by any opposition, snatched it from her, declaring it should be the last she should ever bring. The direction was to the Countess De Meurville, the signature Edward Aubrey. De Meurville was prepared for both, but they created a sickening sensation. He ran over the contents of the letter; it was written in such a style of tenderness, as no man would address to the woman from whom he had not received it, and to whom it would not be welcome. He commenced by expressing the agony he had felt in being torn from her arms, when they had scarce been a moment together: proceeded to swear that nothing but the love he bore her, would have prevented his meeting her husband in combat; but that as it was he refrained, and she must appreciate his forbearance. "Nothing, my Agnes," he said, "but the friendship I bear you, could have induced it—but that restrained my arm; I knew a death-blow to De Meurville, would be a death-blow to you: and forgive my presumption, if I almost fancied that one inflicted by his hand, would, on your delicate

mature, have the same sad effect." In a strain replete with expressions of tenderness towards the Countess—envy of her husband, and indifference of all things that did not, in a nearer or more remote degree, concern the former, did Sir Edward's letter continue; but ere it concluded, he said, "I have just received your's of the twentieth, and am distressed beyond measure to think that, before you get this, you will have suffered days and weeks of anxiety; for my distance from you was greater than you reckoned on when addressing me. Dearest of women, in compliance with your wishes, it shall be yet farther; and the country which contains you, no longer contain your lover. But wherefore, my Agnes, allow your sweet spirits to be distracted in the manner you tell me they have been on my account? Can that life be valuable to you, which you express it your first desire to have passed at an immeasurable distance from you? Or can you possibly imagine it is any longer to me? No: nothing would have induced me to avoid De Meurville's sword, but a fear that I should not be able to refrain my own; and that I should not have philosophy enough to die, and think that he would live—live, and in enjoyment of a blessed repose with you. But why am I adding to this uninteresting epistle, when in the very moments in which I am doing so, you may still be suffering suspense and anxiety. Forgive me, my angelic friend, 'tis you who have occasioned my error, and you will; but not to increase it, I must conclude. Farewell then, dearest and most amiable of women! If De Meurville has not returned to you long ere this, the most heartless of men is the possessor of the most heavenly creature in the world. But he must, he has, the bosom which has so often throbbed responsive to yours, cannot be devoid of human feeling.

"Believe me as ever your admiring, adoring, unhappy,

"EDWARD AUBREY."

The persual of this letter might be supposed to rekindle all De Meurville's rage; but that sensation, with



sorrow, indignation, contempt, and every other, was completely exhausted ; and De Meurville both looked and felt as if, in his bosom, all passions were extinct ; as if for him they could exist no more. That the Countess's attachment had reached every height, but that of actual guilt, he had long brought himself to bear the conviction of ; though every additional proof must revive all his sufferings, if it had not the power to increase them. When De Meurville returned to his wife, it was in much the same frame of mind as he had left her, but there was perhaps a deeper shade of seriousness on his brow ; and when she asked him what had occasioned his sudden departure he replied with an abruptness which she had not been accustomed to receive from him ; and continuing to read, left her under the distressing conviction that it had been to get rid of the subject of their conversation. From that day forward a similar one was never revived between them ; and De Meurville had the grief, the agony, of seeing the creature he loved best on earth, dying by a sorrow which no entreaties could dispel, and no tenderness alleviate.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

“ Teach me to feel another's wo,  
To hide the faults I see ;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.”

FROM the period of Mrs. Damer's seeing Lady Ossulton in Northumberland, she had been so affected by the remembrance of her situation, as to think of little but how it would be possible to rescue her from it ; Mr. Damer being taken to France on business, as he was just before Mrs. Damer's return to London, was unfortunate for the prosecution of her design, and she knew not who to apply to ; of all the Countess's relations there was not one now residing in England

whom she thought she could interest about her, or whom, if she did, would be able to take any steps to serve her. Archdeacon Mandeville living in luxurious indolence in Surry, would she could perfectly anticipate, from her knowledge of his character, answer any appeals made on his sister's behalf, by a request not to be troubled with her affairs, that he was already overloaded with his own; while Captain Mandeville, lately returned with his regiment from America, was of a nature too wild and dissipated to be wrought upon, even by a description of sufferings such as his sister's!

Revolving one day on the subject, Mrs. Damer's attention was caught (as she drove down South Audley Street) by the sight of Mr. Russel, who bowing with something less than his usual sullenness was about to enter his own house.

Immediately an idea crossed her mind, of whether any benefit could be derived by applying to him about Lady Ossulton. That he was no longer related to the Mandeville family, she was aware, but that he might still take some slight interest in them, notwithstanding the unfavourable specimen he had had in Charlotte, she thought not improbable. Acting on the hope at least, and regardless of the disagreeableness of the man, she scribbled upon a piece of paper a request that he would be at home to her for a few minutes on the following morning, and giving it the footman to leave, received immediately a concise answer in the affirmative.

In a little trepidation at the idea of the step she was taking, Mrs. Damer proceeded the next day to fulfil her engagement in South Audley Street; reflecting as she went on the manner in which she should open her case. That it should be with expressing a perfect conviction of the little claim either she or the Countess of Ossulton had upon Mr. Russel, though at the same time a flattering certainty that nothing he had it in his power to do he would refuse, she had settled, when the carriage stopped, and before she was altogether aware of it she was in the presence of the person for whom

all her eloquence was designed, sitting in a gloomy front parlour, with blinds that precluded the least prospect of what was going on without; he was reading a newspaper when she entered, but immediately laid it aside, not indeed with the alacrity of a man, prepared to find in a lady's visit something more agreeable; but with the sullenness of one anticipating from it something very troublesome.

Mrs. Damer apologised for the liberty she was taking in waiting on him, and he muttered out an answer, in which, as only the word necessity was heard, there remained an agreeable doubt of whether any negative had preceded it, but taking it for granted, that in common politeness there had, Mrs. Damer commenced the subject of her visit, said, It had been occasioned by the affliction she lately felt in visiting a lady, who, slightly related to herself, was yet once nearer to him, and whom she could not but think it common humanity to interest any one about that might have it in their power to serve her. This lady, she continued (and indeed rather hastened to announce, for Mr. Russel looked alarmed, as if fearing it was his dead wife returned to life again) was the Countess of Ossulton; one elevated it might have been imagined, beyond any assistance a person so humble as herself could bestow, but this was unfortunately not the case; and then she proceeded to describe the melancholy state in which she had found her, detested by all her relations, cruelly treated by her husband, dying to all appearance, if some immediate measures were not taken for her restoration, and ended by imploring Mr. Russel to write immediately to the Earl of Ossulton, expressing his surprise and grief at the situation in which report whispered the Countess to be, and advising him for the sake of her life, as well as his own reputation, to bring her to London for advice, which step, though it might not save the former, was certainly necessary to the preservation of the latter.

Mr. Russel owned the Countess's case most distressing, but expressed himself quite at a loss to conceive

what motive Mrs. Damer could suppose would induce him, were his acquaintance with the Earl greater than it was, to interest himself about her.

"Some lingering sentiment of affection you might entertain for her unhappy sister," replied she, "to say nothing of compassion."

"Every particle is extinct," was the heart-chilling reply, and Mr. Russel looked, as he spoke, a countenance at which,

"Hope withering fled, and mercy sighed farewell."

"I am to understand, then," returned the other, "that Mrs. Russel's misconduct has effectually hardened your heart against Lady Ossulton."

"Yes, Madam, it has taught me too much compassion for the man who has taken a Mandeville for his wife to add to his misfortunes by insult; and if report speaks true," he added after a short pause, "*you*, Mrs. Damer have but little reason to like the family, for a member of whom you plead."

"I certainly had not," returned she; "but in humble imitation of the Saviour who dying forgave his enemies, I forgive and pity mine."

"'Tis Christian-like certainly," returned Mr. Russel bitterly; "but conduct such as an injured husband finds it very difficult to imitate, and I am sorry to say, madam, it is quite out of my power to comply with the purport of your visit."

"It may as well then terminate," said Mrs. Damer; and negativing his proposition of escorting her to the carriage, she left the room.

All hopes of assistance in that quarter being at end, from which indeed, if Mrs. Damer had consulted the dictates of her reason rather than of her heart, she would never have thought of supplicating it; there was nothing to be done but to write herself to the Earl of Ossulton, describing the shock she had received upon seeing the Countess, and expressing an earnest hope, that he was taking immediate steps for her being

brought to town. This proceeding resolved on, it was put in immediate execution, and Mrs. Damer awaited with anxious impatience an answer from the Earl. At the end of a few days it came, its black edges and seal announcing, before opening, its contents. They were as follows:

“MADAM,

“I had the honour of receiving yours of the 12th inst. and in answer to it have the grief of informing you, that the object of your kind solicitude is no more; she departed this life about a week ago, but in perfect resignation and peace. Perhaps had the plan you proposed of having her brought to London been suggested sooner, I might have adopted it; but as it is we must only hope all was for the best, and persuade ourselves, as I think we may very safely do, that besides the enormous expense necessary, a journey would rather have served to hasten, than retard the sad event which has occurred. I have the honour to be, Madam, your very obedient humble servant,

“OSSULTON.”

The melancholy event announced in this letter deeply affected Mrs. Damer, as may be imagined. How much more when she afterward heard the circumstances that attended, and preceded it. The Earl of Ossulton, long impatient of the life of the Countess from her not having brought him an heir, became towards the end quite savage at its protraction, making no secret of his anxiety for a healthier and wealthier bride. This inhuman conduct preyed, as may be imagined, upon the spirits of the Countess; she became every day weaker and weaker, till at length an object more melancholy it was impossible to conceive.

The airings, which in obedience to Lord Ossulton's commands she was obliged every day to take, became shorter and shorter, and herself quite unequal to bear the sight of any object around. The veil, which at first had been but partially drawn to shade her face,

latterly entirely concealed it ; and the wasted hands which had been not unwont to relieve the passing beggar, lay listless and white as the muslin on which they reclined. It was upon a return from one of those melancholy drives (which were always taken in solemn pomp,) and in about the middle of September, that the Countess was seized with her last illness, which, commencing in a succession of fainting fits, it was apparent to every one around, would shortly terminate in insensibility and death. Acting upon the conviction, the attendants summoned Lord Ossulton to his wife's chamber, and though he was at the moment engaged in the interesting occupation of equipping himself for a hunting expedition, he obeyed their summons, and for about a quarter of an hour stood at the bed-side of his wife, in patient anticipation of what might ensue. As during that time, however, no fit came on, but she lay tolerably composed, he thought it all a false alarm, and muttering something about the probability of its being only a temporary attack, he withdrew from the room to pursue his sport ; scarce however had he gone, when a fit more alarming than the rest, and accompanied with convulsions, seized the Countess, when some cried out to recall the Earl, but all were in a few moments too much occupied with her, to regard the necessity of his being present.

For several hours did she continue in a state the most dreadful, but it was literally in the one in which Lord Ossulton returned triumphant from the chase, and was calling and whistling under her window to his dogs and sportsmen, that she was breathing her last. With a look of horror, which, even though dying, the Countess observed, some one whispered that his Lordship should be sent for ; " No," cried she, in a faint and inarticulate tone, " my voice shall never more arrest his pleasures ! " These were the last words of the Countess of Ossulton. Who to have beheld her when uttering them, could have believed that she had ever been Miss Mandeville ! that the pale emaciated being from whose lips they fell, had ever been that vain, selfish, world-loving creature ?

None : between the latter—such as she always appeared, dressed, brilliant, triumphant—and the former, on the bed of death, there was not one resemblance in common.

When the death of the Countess was announced to Lord Ossulton, he expressed great surprise, and of course some concern ; but soon reconciling both sensations, sent for a quiet friend, whom he was in the habit of summoning when at a loss what to do with himself, and shutting themselves up in a small room with plenty of wine and a good fire, they mutually determined to banish grief—as a dry thing. The next day was occupied by Lord Ossulton in business, and the next in preparations for a journey he was to commence on the following ; for, leaving all the arrangements of his wife's funeral to be transacted at the discretion of his humble friend, it was his intention to remove for some time, from a scene where he fancied that every thing wore an aspect of reproach and dissatisfaction towards *him*. In this, however, he did not fully accomplish his wishes. For just before setting out—which, from being detained with people on business, he did not do till in the afternoon—chance took him to seek for some pistols in a spare chamber, where he not unusually kept such things, when what was his horror on perceiving it was the one in which they had deposited the Countess ! Upon the bed, in her cap and shroud she lay, in ghastly whiteness, the deathly coldness of her form in character with the dull still scene around it. Lord Ossulton started back, and stood for a while as spell-bound to the spot ! A shuddering sensation crept through all his veins, and yet his eyes still fixed in immovable gaze upon the object that occasioned it. He would have left the room, but shame prevented him, and in timid search of the objects for which he came, he raised his eyes above the chimney-piece ; when another and an equally unwelcome object met his view. Whilst on the bed lay the pallid corpse of the Countess of Ossulton, over the chimney-piece hung the blooming image of Miss Mandeville,

"Such as she was when life first smiled  
And grief by name alone she knew."

It was a picture of her that had been brought from Hermitage, and, at the Earl's desire, transferred from room to room, till it had fallen into the obscurity of this. But what a moment was the present for it to meet his sight, for it to be, as it were, conjured up before him ! Certainly the most dreadful that could be conceived ! Already distracted with remorse, the sweet eyes gleaming on him from the portrait, nearly drove him to frenzy. They seemed to ask, whether he could behold what she *had been*, and what she *was*, and endure to live ? He rushed from the apartment. "Let that room," said he to the first domestic he met, "be shut up as soon as the Countess is removed, and opened no more."

The person to whom he spoke, answered quickly and indifferently, "Yes."

But the Earl, as if not considering the answer and manner sufficiently satisfactory, repeated his words : adding with a dreadful scowl, "You will see to it, that I am obeyed !"

## CHAPTER XXII.

"Ah! within my bosom beating,  
Varying passions wildly reign :  
Love, with proud resentment meeting,  
~~Shine~~ by turns of joy and pain."

RATHER more than four months had elapsed since the departure of the Marchioness of Gleuallan from England, and she felt a desire to return, which had only been equalled by her wish to set out. The manners of Lady Isabella Wandesmere, become, from a very early period in the journey, unpleasant, had now assumed a character of haughtiness and indifference, to which it was in vain for the Marchioness any longer to attempt to blind herself. At first, and as may be imagined, every thing



prompted her to do so ; for to believe that the sarcasms, inuendoes, and studied reserves in which Lady Isabel dealt, were meant in reality at her, was a conviction so mortifying, as not to be admitted without agony. Long, however, to continue this self-deception was vain, for Lady Isabel took every means to destroy it ; and in her insolence, and Lord Arabin's indifference, Lady Glenallan found the only additional humiliation she *now* could know. The latter was, indeed, of a more guarded cast than the former ; and while Lady Isabel made no secret of her indifference, the Earl took every method to conceal his ; betraying, by his very anxiety to do so, its extent. Altogether, the Marchioness was rendered wretched by their conduct, and her misery urged complaints, which her pride disdained ; to Lady Isabel they were addressed in indignation, to Lord Arabin, in despair. From the one she received taunts the most cruel, from the other, consolation the most unsatisfactory : he affected not to understand the source of her disquietudes ; Isabel understood it too well.

"But do you think," said the latter, "however I may perceive my present conduct to make you unhappy, that towards you it can ever change ? That I can ever consider the victim of my brother's love, and the unsullied wife of Lord Glenallan, in the same point of view ?"

"I think," said the Marchioness, "that you ought, however, little I may expect it from you : for it was your lips, Isabel, that first seduced me to sin."

"It was your own vile passions," returned the other scornfully ; "and any thing you now calculate on from me but pity, you will be disappointed in receiving."

The Marchioness could literally have torn her to pieces, but rage prevented her replying ; and Lady Isabel continued, "Yes, I pity you, Lady Glenallan ; and the time may come, in which you will have none to do even that."

"It must be already come," interrupted the Marchioness, furiously, "when I would condescend to accept yours ; but, no, take it back, my Lady Isabel, and, remember, the world has spoken of you in a manner

which renders your present affected superiority rather amusing than otherwise."

Isabel regarded her for a moment in silence, and as if unwilling to deprive her of the little self-consequence she seemed to derive from that idea : but, at length, she said, "You are fallen, indeed, Lady Glenallan, when you condescend to recrimination, when you endeavour to lay the imputation of guilt on me, to palliate it in yourself; but unfortunately for *your* gratification, it does not exist; and any insinuations the world might have made to *my* disadvantage, were only prompted by that spirit of malignity, which superior endowments, whether of nature or of fortune, never fail to inspire."

"And yet," said the Marchioness, with provoking contempt, "there are some, Lady Isabel, who, possessing both in a superior degree to yourself, have contrived to escape censure."

"You cannot speak from experience," observed the other with a demoniac laugh, "nor I, I am sure, from observation; therefore, neither of *us* are calculated to judge."

Lady Glenallan looked at her, and if looks could kill, Lady Isabel had not lived; but, as it was, she survived to hear, with perfect *sang froid*, a harangue of the Marchioness's, against her cruelty, ingratitude, and so forth: "I believe," concluded the latter, "that on earth, a thing so heartless as yourself does not exist."

"It is not the first time," returned Lady Isabel, "that I have heard you express sentiments similarly flattering; and if they are real, it must, I imagine, be your desire—as it has long been *mine*—that we should part for ever."

"It is my first, my most earnest desire," returned the Marchioness, "and of its not being speedily put in execution, you shall not have reason to complain." So saying, her Ladyship left the room, and sought for Lord Glenallan. Into a room where he usually sat she went, and seeing a gentleman sitting at the upper end, presumed, though it was too dusk absolutely to determine, that it was the Marquess. Acting on the supposition

at least, she shut the door, and approached him : " My Lord," she began, when the person started up, and not her husband, but Lord Arabin stood before her ! " Oh, I have to make a thousand apologies !" cried the Marchioness, and would have retreated—but he intercepted her with his arms.

" And wherefore, Georgiana ?" he asked, in accents which would once have excited all her love, and even now revived it.

" Oh, because—" said the Marchioness, as hesitating, she struggled to release herself from him ; " because I had no need to intrude on you," at length she added.

" Or perhaps," returned the Earl, in a tone between playfulness and reproach, " because you are aware I consider your entrance so great an intrusion, so intolerable an interruption."

" Perhaps so !" sighed she, careless whether he should imagine her in earnest or not.

" Perhaps so !" he repeated. " Is it then become so completely indifferent, whether your presence makes me happy, or your absence miserable. Is it Georgiana Lady Glenallan ?" he continued.

" If it is *not*, I only know as well that it ought to be," replied the Marchioness, " as that I should see the last of any hope centred in yourself or Lady Isabel. Oh, Edward ! your sister is killing me," she continued ; " and unpleasing as may be the theme, it is of her cruelty, and your determined blindness to it, I must speak, if you detain me. It was to implore for my being put at once out of the power of both, I came to seek my Lord, not indeed that to him I should have mentioned my real reasons for wishing it ; for to complain of yourself or of Lady Isabel to him, would be as humiliating as vain."

" To say nothing of unjust," added the Earl, who to her speech had given a restless, wayward, dissatisfied sort of attention, extremely displeasing to the Marchioness.

" That, it would be more difficult to prove, my Lord,"

returned she ; "nor did I think that you would attempt to do it."

"And yet," said the Earl, "it is very usual for people to refute accusations they feel to be unfounded."

"When they do—it all turns upon that, my Lord," replied she coldly.

"And I do, and Isabel does," said he, quickly ; "but the fact is, Lady Glenallan," he continued with an impatience which, considering he was addressing a woman, and she once the woman he loved, was not altogether what might have been expected from him, "you are weary of us ; and because we do not realize all the perfections with which your imagination was kind enough to invest us, we are become every thing that is hateful and disagreeable to you."

"Not so, my Lord," replied she, with an offended air, "imagination had no influence in creating the partiality I entertained for yourself and Lady Isabel. It was excited by an appearance of qualities the most superior, it was increased by acquaintanceship, it was justified by reason ; and is dissolved from a conviction that the qualities which delighted me, were assumed—the friendliness, which more than half way met mine, adopted for sinister motives—and the reason on which I relied, perverted to sanction our intimacy."

"All of which is very polite and flattering, certainly," said the Earl, with mortifying carelessness, "but surely, Lady Glenallan, you took some time to discover it. Isabel and I, at least, deserve credit, for having kept up our parts so long."

"Oh, you deserve every credit on that score my Lord !" returned she, bitterly, "and enjoy the humiliating distinction."

The Earl fixed his eyes upon her, as if unable to understand her meaning, or to conceive it possible that to *him* she was in reality speaking thus ! but presently, and with an air of one who felt too little interested to refute or defend with vehemence, he asked her whether she thought it likely, that if he and his sister had been in reality maintaining a part, they would not, at least, have continued it till absence, or a change of circum-

stances, had, in some degree, accounted for its alteration? Do you not think," he said "we should be anxious to separate, confirming the amiable impressions we first inspired?"

"I think it possible, my Lord," said she, "but the circumstances to which I conceive you allude, have already occurred, and you and Lady Isabel obtained all that you promised yourselves in an acquaintance with me; so that it is only consistent with the selfishness I now attribute to you, to disburthen yourselves of one who must stand in the way of your views, and interfere with your forming desirable connexions."

"Oh, Lady Glenallan!" exclaimed the Earl, with sudden and uncontrollable emotion, "if it is in a light so contemptible you view us, little wonder it is in a precipitation so great you leave us. But can you"—and he looked at her so pleadingly, so beautiful, that she felt her heart relenting towards him—"can you entertain impressions thus unfavourable of me? Can you part, indulging ideas which would prevent your ever desiring to meet me in this world, or anticipating it in the next? No you cannot! I think you cannot!" he continued, watching her varying countenance, and reflecting every sensation it betrayed in his own.

"I would not willingly," said she, "believe Lord Arabin any thing he is so averse to being thought himself; and since he convinces me by his present earnestness, that his former love was not assumed, believe its decline to be only the inevitable successor to its existence, however heart-breaking may be the conviction, however humiliating the idea!"

"If heart-breaking, if humiliating," said the Earl, "let it not be indulged, for it is also vain!

'Oh! how can man's success remove,  
The very charms which wake his love.'

"You best can tell what I alone can feel," she replied; "but, as to neither you or I it can any longer be a matter of importance, so let it not be of discussion. To-morrow, my Lord, I leave Venice, and since between this and then, we may not meet again, I now bid you farewell." She extended her hand, but he

made no movement to receive it. "Will you not bid me farewell, Edward!" she continued, perceiving he averted his face in reproachful silence.

"I cannot, I cannot!" exclaimed the Earl, and extended his arms as if to implore a last embrace. She did not refuse it him; but it was with heart-breaking sighs each hung upon the other. Little of the transport that had commenced their connexion, concluded it; though each felt for the other, sentiments that rendered the idea of parting for ever distressing! He at first tried to combat her resolution of leaving them, but seeing that was irrevocable, expressed his desire of accompanying her a part of the way on her journey to Calais, from which port she proposed embarking for England. At first the Marchioness hesitated, but seeing he was so urgent on the subject, she at length consented, and after an interview with the Marquess, to whom it was only necessary to state that the delicacy of her health rendered longer remaining abroad undesirable, the three agreed in setting out in a day or two. In pursuing the line of conduct Lord Arabin did towards Lady Glenallan, he neither followed the dictates of his feelings, nor outraged them, but acted upon the opinion that it was better to part, maintaining a character for amiability and propriety of sentiment. In which Lord Arabin so far thought right, as afterward to receive from Lady Glenallan's heart a testimonial of it.

"I leave you, my Lord," she, at parting, said, "with sorrow, such as I had begun to believe this hour could not occasion me; but you have taught me, among other lessons, that the woman once loved by Lord Arabin, may easier wish, desire, determine to forget him, than accomplish it; you have also convinced me," she continued, "that the woman for whose sake you renounce all others, in whose affections you place your first confidence, and in whose society your highest happiness; will be the most enviable in existence. Oh, Edward! may the wife of your choice be ever that woman!" she continued, and he expressed all that a man so flattered and beloved, might be imagined to do.

Not to feel for Lord Arabin, unworthy as he was, different sentiments from any a mere man of the world could inspire, would have been difficult—Lady Glenallan thought impossible. There was about even his faults a something so noble, as to persuade you they were intended for virtues; and that he, who when even lost in pleasure, and given up to profligacy, appeared so seductive, would, excited by higher motives, and inspired by better views, become all that was amiable and exemplary. If even on a casual observer the Earl was calculated to make such impressions, what must he not on the woman to whom he had appeared in so endearing a light as he had to Lady Glenallan? On one so comprehended of every thing formed to make a parting dreadful! She literally felt, in the hour in which it took place, as if nothing the world contained could ever interest her more, as if with Lord Arabin were fled all the ties that had ever bound her to it; and perhaps with him they had, for he had first created them. Till Lady Glenallan knew the Earl, though she had mixed in pleasure indeed, and appreciated admiration, she had never received from either the delight they afterward afforded. It was not till the enchantments of the Opera, or the brilliancy of the Birth-night, had been enjoyed in company with her lover, that they began to fascinate Lady Glenallan's senses. But then, and little wonder they did, to hear a thousand seraph voices—to see a thousand seraph faces—to listen to sounds which, though swelling from earth, seemed to terminate in heaven—to be surrounded with creatures who, though mixing in mortal, yet breathed of immortal life—and that, by the side of him who realized in himself all that woman's heart could wish, or fancy's pencil picture—was enough to detach such a mind as Lady Glenallan's, from celestial to sublunary joys. It effectually did so; and with the Earl were connected associations never more to be separated from happiness. He became the idol of her imagination, in proportion as he was distant from her sight; and if once she had thought herself miserable, though enjoying his presence, and

sharing his attentions, she now would have considered herself but too happy to have been allowed to follow him—the meanest of his creatures. Indulging such regrets, and living on such retrospections, it may be imagined that Lady Glenallan was not to her husband the most agreeable of companions; so far from it, that he hated her very sight, and endured it but as a misery from which he could have no escape.

Under such circumstances they returned to England, and, after a short stay there, proceeded to Glenallan Castle; for once as much at the Marchioness's as Marquess's desire: she having been received, even by the few people of *ton* then in London, with such mortifying coldness, as gave her too lively an idea of what she might expect from the rest, to allow of her anticipating, by several months, her residence in the capital. It was the latter end of September in which she and the Marquess arrived at Glenallan; and perhaps one circumstance in common, that of their being in the same carriage, recalled to the mind of each the different circumstances under which they had first visited it. Certain it is, that both Lord and Lady Glenallan, as they reclined at opposite sides of the barouche, seemed lost in retrospection, and allowed their cherub child, who had hitherto been an object of attention to each, to prattle unheeded. It was a bleak wintry evening, the yellow leaves falling in all directions, and the sun communicating but a chilling brightness to the objects which it touched. The Marchioness seemed, as she lay with her eyes fixed upon the latter, to be boding future woes; and the Marquess, as he glanced his upon her, could not but be forcibly struck with the change which had, since her marriage, taken place in her beauty. It was not that it was not equally resplendent, for, perhaps, it was more; but it was now

"A beauty for ever unchangeably bright,  
Like the long sunny lapse of a summer-day night,  
Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,  
Till love falls asleep in its sameness of splendour."

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And such had it not been when first he knew her ! Ah ! no : but all composed of looks "that breathe, and smiles that burn." To think, however, of what Lady Glenallan had been, was so vain, that the Marquess soon discontinued the contemplation ; and when arrived at the Castle, they were both, for a while, too much immersed in the concerns of the present to dwell upon the past.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

"If there be love in mortals, this was love."

TAKING advantage of one of those temporary appearances of improved health, which even in the most fatal declines will sometimes occur, De Meurville took his wife on a visit to the Baron and Baroness De Roncevalles. The house was large, and filled with company.

"You might fancy this Hermitage, Agnes," said De Meurville, as, dressed for dinner, they were standing, on the day but one after their arrival, at the fire in their room, previous to descending to the drawing-room.

She faintly smiled.

"There is one point of resemblance wanting, you would say," said he, in a lower tone than he had before spoken ; "we were lovers then."

"I should rather say," said Agnes, "we were happy then ; for, I believe"—and the half-conscious, but still melancholy, expression that for a moment returned his glance, betrayed what she could not speak.

"That we are lovers still," said he, and looked a sweet and lovely confirmation of his words. She gave him her hand, and they descended to the drawing-room.

"It is a curious circumstance enough," the Baroness

was saying when they entered, "I this morning received a letter from a Lady, with whom I have not kept up the slightest intimacy this seven years; and the purport of it is, to invite herself on a visit to me; she says she is in an awkward predicament, and wishes to be out of Vienna for a few weeks, but, unless I have the charity to receive her, has no where to go."

Every one smiled, and expressed curiosity as to whether the Baroness would have that charity.

"Oh, certainly," replied the other, "for though she is not a lady of the strictest principle, and most fastidious delicacy, she is good-natured, and, as you will all know, when I announce it to be the Countess De Soissons—beautiful as an angel."

At the annunciation of that name, some looked intelligently, and others suspiciously; but attention was diverted by the appearance of Agnes, who, pale as death, had fallen back on the sofa on which she was sitting.

"What can be the cause of this?" resounded on all sides, and De Meurville flew to his wife, with all the tenderness of the fondest, most impassioned, lover.

"It is over, my weakness is over," cried the Countess, and recovered herself sooner than might have been expected; but her words, though received generally, were addressed to De Meurville alone.

"What brought on this faintness, my best beloved?" he murmured, as motioning for the rest to move on to dinner, which had been announced; he stayed for a few minutes behind them.

"Oh, De Meurville!" accompanied with something like a look of reproach, and more than once an expression of surprise at his asking the question, was all he could obtain in reply.

"Speak to me, tell me, my Agnes!" he continued, in caressing accents, to repeat, but she only implored him to leave her, to be less mindful of her.

"I shall be better in the evening," said she, and at length he left her, but it was with an almost breaking heart; he felt that Agnes was fast receding from his

sight—that dull and dreary as had this world's pilgrimage now become, it was to be yet more gloomy, should the only light which illumined it be withdrawn, and Agnes no longer to share it with him !

On the following day, the Countess de Soissons joined the party at dinner. She was beautiful, but beauty was not her only attraction ; her voice, her smile, her manner, were delightful, and though evidently artificial, seduced the heart. She would have been like Lady Isabella Wandesmere, but Isabel's were more the graces of nature ; as it was, she came nearer to the Countess of Ossulton, there was the same desire of admiration, and the same attempt to conceal it, the same external softness, and internal bitterness. To all outward appearance, however, she was a bewitching creature, and, by every one but the Countess De Meurville, treated with the affability her endeavours at pleasing, and superior powers at doing so, entitled her to receive. By that Lady alone, she was regarded with a haughtiness, which, whether it proceeded from a suspicion of the Countess's disregard of virtue, or dread of her becoming an object of attraction in De Meurville's eyes, evidently wounded the former, and surprised the latter. He even ventured, though gently, to reproach her for it, saying it was unkind, considering the peculiar attention and affection the Countess De Soissons appeared inclined to manifest towards her and her child ; that whatever might have been the lady's faults, they had neither been of a turpitude to excite such indignation, nor of a nature to render contamination dangerous.

Agnes listened in immoveable composure, to her husband's observations, and when he had finished speaking, replied, with an expression of contempt, at the Countess having selected him for a mediator, in any negotiation that was to be entered into with her.

De Meurville looked for a moment as doubtful whether he understood his wife aright, and then observed, "It is my vanity, Agnes, and not the Countess De Soissons, you must blame, if I was led into the error

of supposing, that a word from me would have power to influence you upon any subject."

Agnes evidently endeavoured to look calm and indifferent, but some sensation caused unbidden tears. De Meurville perceived it, and though he felt too much irritated at the moment by her unfounded jealousy to kiss them from her eyes, they occasioned a temporary dimness to his own; unable at length to resist the impulse, he caught her in his arms. "Tell me, teach me," he fondly cried, "how I may hope to refine the inlets to that heart which I seem to have lost for ever!"

She replied but with heart-breaking sighs; her bosom seemed filled with some conviction she dared not give vent to, and of which his caresses only heightened the agony! "Let me die, let me die!" at length she said, releasing herself from him, "I cannot sustain such misery, and live."

"My Agnes, my life!" returned he, endeavouring to retain her in his arms, "is it from your husband you fly? From whom else can you look for consolation?"

"From heaven," replied the Countess; and her fleeting colour, her fragile form, all bespoke her hastening to the world of which she spoke.

"Have you no mercy on me," cried De Meurville, throwing himself around her, "that you speak and look thus? Or can this world indeed have lost all power to attach you, while I am in it?"

Agnes's tears betrayed that could not be—and De Meurville understood them: "No, you cannot say it!" he continued, "and would you leave me, leave me ever for bliss, until you have taught me to obtain it, until I am worthy to share it—"

'Ah! want your heaven, till I have learnt the way.'

She endeavoured to comfort him, and in part succeeded, but there was no rational ground for consolation; Agnes was dying! and apparently, under the distressing idea of De Meurville's being attached to another. That she had grounds for her suspicions is

certainly true, for he and the Countess De Soissons were constantly together ; they never rode or walked, but it was in each other's society, and whether Agnes entered a room, or looked from a window, she was sure to have the misery of perceiving the Countess engaged with her husband.

That *he* did not appear to take the delight in her society which she evidently did in his, and always made a point to explain away the circumstances that brought them together, was no consolation to Agnes: she felt that all the attention and tenderness De Meurville continued to lavish upon her, was but a veil to conceal his stronger attachment to her rival ; and without upbraiding either, except by the distance of her manner, suffered all the mortification and anguish that such a conviction was calculated to inflict. In the mean time, the Countess De Soissons behaved towards her with an attention and affectation of friendship, which made it appear the unkindest thing in the world to repulse her: never employed, except in suggesting something to her comfort, or her little boy's amusement, it seemed extraordinary to De Meurville, that Agnes should so coldly return her civilities ; but the latter perfectly saw through the artifice which dictated them, and whilst in the Count's presence they were always bestowed with winning smiles and graces, in his absence they were sure to be accompanied by some expression calculated to cut her to the heart ; such as, " I wanted De Meurville to stay at home with you yesterday, but he had bad taste enough to prefer a ride with *me*," or, " I haven't common patience with that husband of yours ; though you were so ill yesterday, he would, I assure you, if I had allowed him, have stopped all the morning, flirting and talking with *me*. Now were I the Countess De Meurville, said I, I would punish you, by appearing as indifferent as yourself."

" He never appears indifferent !" exclaimed Agnes in an early period of these communications, and with her eyes streaming with tears, " he only loves me too well for his own happiness, and would never quit my pre-

sence, but that I drive him from it, for the sight of me is killing him, yes, it is killing him!" she continued, "and it is not such as you," but this was added in a lower tone, "will ever supply my place to him."

The Countess heard this last remark, but did not affect to do so, and to the former only replied by a mysterious smile. It was, however, the last time Agnes had the courage to repel, with equal spirit, her insinuations; for every thing, except De Meurville's unremitting tenderness to herself, confirmed the idea of their being founded in truth. She went one morning into the drawing-room, and found the Countess with her arms around his neck. They were, to be sure, instantaneously withdrawn, and before she could retreat or proceed, De Meurville's about herself; but then the sight occasioned her a pang which neither his reiterated assurances then—or thousands after—of the Countess's only having been describing to him a scene which she had witnessed—could dissipate. Agnes felt, perhaps, that she had lost the right to reproach her husband for inconstancy—though she had not the sensibility which made its contemplation agonizing.

The instance mentioned, however, was not the only one in which, by ocular demonstration of De Meurville's attachment, his wife was wounded to the heart. Going, upon several occasions, into the room in which they were, she had the misery of perceiving him start, in evident embarrassment, from a seat he had been occupying by the side of the Countess's drawing table; and which, ere long, Agnes had an opportunity of determining was taken for the purpose of that lady's sketching his picture. In unutterable anguish did she make the discovery—and from that moment, her husband's caresses and tenderness seemed almost to drive her to frenzy.

"What can I do for you? What can I do for you?" he would wildly ask.

She replied but with heart-breaking sighs and exclamations of agony—"Nothing, nothing!" She would sometimes say, "The wealth of worlds, were heaped on me in vain!"

De Meurville began literally to fear for her reason, so incessant was her grief, so maddening apparently its source. No cause, he imagined, but a sense of guilt would be adequate to excite it; and that, though he could conceive it might—would, he supposed, if at all, have done so before. Of the possibility of her being jealous of the Countess De Soissons (whether there were grounds for it or not) De Meurville never seemed to entertain an idea; probably from the indifference with which pride had ever induced Agnes to listen to any explanation of his conduct towards the Countess, or to behold any thing which passed between them. Whatever were the cause of her sufferings, that she could not sustain them long, and live, soon became very apparent. De Meurville wanted to remove her from the castle, conceiving it no longer a fit residence, but the Baroness De Roncevalles would not hear of it; and while the Countess became every day weaker and weaker, and at length unable to rise from her bed, the attentions of the former, and all her guests, were such as De Meurville declared himself incapable of ever forgetting, however inadequate he might be to expressing his gratitude for—"he trusted, however," he would sometimes say, "that the time might yet come, when his unhappy Agnes would be able to return all the kindnesses which at present she could only feel!" The expression of this hope drew tears from all eyes, considering by whom it was uttered, and of whom indulged—by an adoring husband of an evidently dying wife; that it would ever be realized, few perhaps could behold the Countess De Meurville, and for a moment imagine. Her bright eyes—her sweetly varying colour—her scarlet lips—conveyed any sensations but those of pleasure, and confirmed any feelings but those of hope; her fate only became more apparent, in proportion as her person became more heavenly.

"Like stars shooting down a dark sky,  
She seem'd brightest—when falling for ever!"

Caressing one afternoon his beautiful child, whom

he had taken from the bed of its mother, unable to bear the contrast which her delicate appearance presented to this happy and healthy one, De Meurville was brought in the letters which had just arrived; there were two from England, and one of them, to his surprise, directed by a female: he opened, however, the other first, perceiving it was from Sir Sydney Mandeville, to whom he had written some weeks ago, anxious to have a confirmation under his own hand—of whether he had in reality been in Germany or not. The Baronet's reply, though brief, was friendly; it commenced by an expression of regret, that his not having been at Hermitage had prevented his receiving, and consequently answering, the Count's letter sooner; but proceeded to state in answer to the purport of it, that neither he or his brother had left the country, since the Count's departure from it; nor could he conceive—for De Meurville not having given him particulars, he had no clue—what motive could have induced any one to personify him; that it must be an imposition as unprofitable as apparent, he expressed his conviction, and requesting De Meurville would expose it, wherever it had deceived, he remained with best remembrance to Agnes, whom he hoped was enjoying health and happiness, his very obedient, humble servant,

SYDNEY MANDEVILLE.

The Count sighed as he closed the letter, and Agnes, whose meek eyes had been fixed upon it, from perceiving the English post-mark, now raised them to his face, with such a look of inquiry, as De Meurville could not resist.

Feeling unwilling, however, by communicating its contents, to renew the sad subject of their differences, he only replied to her anxious look, by saying, "It is from your brother Sydney, love, he is quite well."

"From Sydney! and from England!" in astonishment repeated the Countess, and looked as if she would have fainted, "Oh, De Meurville, do not say it!"

Distressed, he took her hand—but she withdrew it.



"That hand," said she, "shall never more clasp yours, until I discover the name of the person who feigned to me to be my brother."

Half distracted, De Meurville threw himself towards her, "Why will you agitate yourself thus?" he cried. "It cannot be to regain my affections: for you know you have long since done that."

"No, it is to justify them," returned the Countess, "and now listen, De Meurville, to what I entreat! Summon Villars to your presenee, and let her not quit it till she has confessed to you the name of the person I met, for she must know, and, I now begin to fear, too well! Yes, do, *do*!" she continued, "'tis your Agnes' last request."

Affected by her appeal, rather than attentive to her previous words, De Meurville lay almost senseless in her arms. "I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it!" he faintly murmured; "if you are going to heaven, Agnes! take your husband with you!"

She endeavoured by her tenderness, her embraces, her reiterated assurances of not feeling worse than usual, to comfort him, but he seemed, and indeed had for some time past, like one heart-broken; words of consolation died away upon the lips which witnessed their inefficacy to afford it, and Agnes' voice was lost in emotion. The idea of what De Meurville—who was losing his health, his peace, almost his reason, in the prospect of parting with her; who could not bear to behold her child, from the agonizing sensations it produced—would suffer when that hour in reality arrived, which was to separate her from him for ever, almost distracted her with misery!

"Oh, De Meurville, oh my husband!" at length she said, "if you would not precipitate the moment of which it is so dreadful to you even to think, you must leave me for awhile, for I cannot sustain the sight of your sufferings, and endure my own!" In silent anguish De Meurville hung upon the looks, and listened to the voice of his beloved wife, every wish of whose was now become sacred; and in compliance with her request at length

he left her, but it was not till each were relieved of any doubts they might ever have indulged, of being dearer to one another than life and all that it contained.

Not immediately did De Meurville feel equal to summoning Villars to his presence, but throwing himself upon a chair, was about to yield to a train of melancholy reflections, when recollections of the English letter which he had not yet read came across him, and willing to fly to any resource from his own meditations, he took it from his pocket and began to open it. Not far, however, had he proceeded, before another letter fell from it, which, upon taking up, he found, to his surprise, directed to Lady Warwick in the hand-writing of his wife. It was not the circumstance of Agnes having written to the latter that surprised him, for he knew she was her former friend, Miss Morton, lately married to a Baronet of that name. Anxious to solve the mystery, he ran over the epistle in which it was enclosed, and which, short, and signed Catherine Warwick, was as follows :

“SIR,

“Conceiving it possible, that breaking through the reserve which upon any other occasion would make me shrink from the idea of addressing you, may prove serviceable to the interests of my unfortunate friend, I venture upon a step, which, however unprecedented, I trust you will not consider impertinent. A few days since I received a letter from the Countess, which, written under the deepest dejection of mind, gave me such an account of the circumstances that had occasioned her parting with you, as left no doubt on my mind, of your being once more the victims of artful malignity, and your conduct towards her induced by other suspicions than she is aware of, having given rise to, or is in the least degree capable of justifying. Urged by that conviction, I enclose her letter to you, and though I trust it may not prove the first occasion of bringing you to a sense of the injustice you have unintentionally done her, if it should dissipate any remaining doubts from your mind,

or lead to a conviction of the wretches who originally implanted them, it will be more than desirable that I should have sent it.

I have the honour to be, &c.

CATHERINE WARWICK."

De Meurville, first glancing at the date of this letter, which betrayed to him, as he anticipated, that he should have received it three or four weeks before, proceeded to read that of his unfortunate Agnes. It was written under evident agitation, and as follows :

"Fallen from a state which angels might have envied, to one in comparison with which annihilation would be bliss, my worst enemies might pity me, how much more will you ! In addressing you, my friend, it is rather with a hope that I may from you receive some advice as to what line of conduct I should pursue in my present sad circumstances, than from any pleasure I can take in pursuing what was once my most delightful occupation. When I tell you, Catherine, that more than having lost De Meurville's affections, I am apparently separated from him for ever, you will rather wonder that I have reason left to tell you so, than that I do it in a state of mind bordering on distraction. Yes, my friend, heart-rending as is the conviction, I am separated from De Meurville, and, for aught I know, for ever. More than three weeks have elapsed since he left me, and since then, though I have heard through indirect channels of his being in existence, I have not from himself received the slightest communication.

"Only imagine what would be your own sufferings under a less poignant calamity, and then under so great a one, imagine mine ! But what has led to this event so extraordinary, so unprecedented, so unjustified, I cannot help saying by any misconduct on my part, you must be anxious to learn ; and I will, before the weakness, hourly increasing on me, becomes too great to permit of my writing, endeavour to tell you.

"About a month since, then, I received information

of my brother Sydney's being in Vienna, and extremely anxious to obtain an interview with me, if it could be effected without De Meurville's knowledge; that it could, though not so completely to my satisfaction, I was perfectly aware, and therefore consented to meet him on the following evening, upon condition of his sending me in the interval some token of his being in reality the person he would pretend. Agreeably to my wishes he did so, and a note, written in the hand of Sydney, accompanied with a picture of the latter, prevented any doubts remaining in my mind as to the identity of the person with whom I was in treaty. But the very moment in which my suspicions were set at rest was the one in which De Meurville's were roused; he happened to come into my dressing-room just as I, having received, was regarding the picture, and foolishly, or rather unfortunately, as I now think, I put it down my bosom to conceal it from him. He evidently saw my confusion, and though at the time he made no comment on it, scarcely had he left me, which he did at the end of a few minutes, than I became convinced that I ought to follow him, and in some way account for it.

"With an intention so to do, I was moving towards the door, when my eye was caught by a paper, which, lying near the latter, it was evident De Meurville had dropped in going out. Carelessly I picked it up, and seeing no direction, opened it, but my eyes had ran twice over the following, before my astonished senses could comprehend that it was in reality addressed to De Meurville. To you it will be apparent at a moment's glance, but then you know not, nor can ever know, what little reason I have to suspect him of want of affection for me, of all other failings upon earth.

#### 'TO THE COUNT DE MEURVILLE.

'In vain the dearest of men would attempt to persuade me that all this attention to his wife is necessary to prevent her suspicions. If it were, she must be the most suspicious of her sex, and he the most suspected of his; but no, it is not, and, deceived himself, De

Meurville cannot deceive me, and Agnes, not Adelia; is again become my Clifford's. Yet if it were so soon to be so, why did you ever steal from her slumbers to mine? Why did you delude me with a dream of love, which her first return to health was for ever to dissipate? Was it to impress on my memory recollections, that it were now better to have forgotten for ever? If it were, he who seemed all that was lovely, and amiable, and true, was all that was lovely alone! One short month ago, De Meurville, and you swore that not all the embraces of your Agnes had half the power to delight you, as mine; and now, it would seem, they have a thousand times more! Oh man! on what a source do we centre our happiness when we rest it on thee! But come to me, my Clifford, and prove that you are not that unworthy one! Come to me at the hour in which your wife attends her toilet, and defer on any pretext your ordinary visit to her! It will revive an image which once had the power to please, and, be it but for a moment, I am happy to recall to your memory mine.

‘ADELIA DE SOISSONS.’

“The note fell from my hands, I could not weep, I could not speak; I sank upon a chair, like one bereft of reason; but to tell you what I felt in that dreadful moment, would be unavailing as impossible. Suffice it to say, that it was such suffering as only a beloved husband could inflict, and a beloved wife could feel. I should have fainted, but one of my attendants, observing my situation, brought me some water, which a little revived me, and I had just strength to reach the adjoining room, and throw myself on a bed, where I gave up to all the anguish which a conviction of De Meurville's loving another was calculated to inflict. ‘Oh, can this be he,’ said I, ‘so kind, so unremittingly attentive to me, who, whether I have been ill or well, has seemed to prefer my society to that of all others, and my most imperfectly expressed assurances of regard, to any applauses with which mankind could honour him? No it cannot be, or if it be, I would I had not

known it, for to love De Meurville in future as I have done, will be humiliating, and to love him less, would be impossible !' Agonized by my reflections, and almost blinded by my tears, I fell at the end of an hour in a sort of a slumber, from which I was presently awoke, by a confusion of steps and voices in the adjoining room. Alarmed, I arose and opened the door, when what a sight presented itself to my eyes ! De Meurville, the source of my anxiety indeed, but the object of my most idolatrous admiration and love, extended inanimate, and apparently lifeless on a sofa ; Wildly I flew to him, demanding of those around what had brought him thus ? but none of them seemed to know or to have a confused account. Villars, who had been in another room when he came in, said he had done so, looking very ill ; and while she was away, getting something for him, he had fainted, but of what had originally brought on his illness she expressed herself totally ignorant. That, whatever it was, the sight of him lying colourless and inanimate in my arms, almost drove me to frenzy, is certain. I tried every remedy my imagination could suggest, or my memory could recall for his recovery, but at first all seemed alike unavailing. At length, however, though slowly, his insensibility seemed yielding to their united influence, and I had the happiness of seeing the eyes that were dearer to me than life, raised, as if to discover to whom he was indebted for restoration. Short-lived happiness ! scarcely had they met mine before he threw himself from my arms, and when, conceiving it must proceed from unconsciousness of whom he was rejecting, I again embraced him, told me to leave him, for that he never, never wished to see me more !

“ Alarmed by his words, I remained for a moment like one stupified, neither withdrawing my arms from about him, or enforcing their caresses ; but conceiving presently that I must have misunderstood them, and that if he was alone with me he would explain them, I motioned those who were in the room to depart, and

telling De Meurville, 'that it was his wife, his Agnes, who watched over him,' expected certainly a different answer, and manner, than the preceding. Instead of that they were repeated with, if possible, still greater symptoms of contempt; he literally shrunk from my touch, as though it had been contamination;—and from the sound of my voice, as though it had never been the one he had best loved to hear! Overcome altogether by his manner, and convinced that it was occasioned by another, of whom I had not now the influence, nor, as was supposed to De Meurville, the knowledge, I burst into tears; rather irritated than surprised, he continued his entreaties that I would leave him, told me I was driving him to distraction, and that he would be where where myself and my tears could never haunt him more!

" 'Oh, De Meurville!' said I, and fell at his feet.

" Fearful, apparently, of being softened by the sight, he threw me from him, and crossing and recrossing the room with hurried and irregular steps, did not speak, I believe, or if he did I did not hear him, till in sarcastic and indignant tones he demanded of me 'Whether it were thus I had won Edward Aubrey's heart?' So totally had a recollection of the person he mentioned escaped my memory at the moment, that I replied but with a look of vacancy, and though a little consideration brought him to my mind, as a gentleman who had occasionally visited at Hermitage; and of whom, in the early days of our acquaintance, De Meurville used sometimes to pretend to me he was jealous; the idea of the latter conjuring him up at this moment, appeared to me so ridiculous and extraordinary, that I knew not how to account for it, or in what manner to reply to him. Suddenly a thought rushed across my mind, not indeed in elucidation of his mysterious allusion to Sir Edward Aubrey, but in explanation of all his other conduct. 'Is it not possible,' said I, 'that he saw me put the picture down my bosom, though he made no observation on it at the time, thinking I might afterward explain the

circumstance to him, and that this is the occasion of all his indignation and anguish? Oh it must be, it must be,' I said, and springing toward him, I told him what I fancied were his suspicions; owned they were natural, though totally unfounded, for it was a picture of my brother's only, at which I had been looking when he came into the room. How to account for my confusion, and hasty concealment of it, I did not exactly know, without confessing it had been sent to me to confirm the truth of my brother's being in Vienna, which would be betraying all I had solemnly promised to conceal. Leaving him, therefore, to suppose it had proceeded from unwillingness on my part to appear to value any one, who did not sufficiently prize him, I made no explanation of when I received the picture, but continued to repeat 'It is my brother's, indeed it is my brother's!' If I had been the vilest of human creatures, instead of lately the most beloved, De Meurville could not have thrown on me a look of more profound contempt.

" 'Your brother's!' he repeated, 'you lost, unhappy creature!' 'It is,' and he frantically asserted it was 'Sir Edward Aubrey's.'

" Forgetting that I had it taken from me when I went to lie down, I began to feel for the picture in my bosom, thinking that ocular demonstration might convince him of what my words could not.

" He saw for what I was searching, and telling me the picture was in a less soft asylum than my bosom, took it from a drawer, and dashed it in a thousand pieces before my eyes. Terrified by his looks, still more by a conviction of the frenzy that must have come over him when he could not recognise the picture for Sydney's, I rushed from the room, and should not have returned, but that I met my child, who, smiling in the arms of its nurse, looked so peaceful and so beautiful, as to tempt me to return with him to his father; accordingly I did so, and falling at the feet of De Meurville, remained for a while unable to speak. He was evidently affected, though from a desire that I should not per-



ceive it, he kept his eyes averted from mine, and spoke more unkindly than I am convinced at that moment he felt, for he told me, when I adjured him to love his boy, though he might no longer me, that whatever he now was, he was once the child of her on whom he doted: that he was then the child of the most deceiving and ungrateful of human creatures! 'unless, indeed,' he added, 'I am to doubt the evidence of my senses.'

"'Oh, doubt any thing,' cried I, 'but my love! for any thing you may with better reason! The picture you saw was as truly my brother's as the child I hold your own.'

"This assertion, however, only served to renew all his irritation, and he struck me nearly dead by asserting, 'that he had other proofs of my inconstancy, than finding another man's picture in my possession, alone could afford him.'

"'No, you cannot, you cannot!' I screamed in desperation, and unable to conceive to what he alluded, fixed my eyes in a wild and despairing anguish upon him. A silence ensued for some moments; he seemed looking about the room for something which he could not discover, and I remained mute and motionless at his feet. 'Twas a prudent precaution,' at length he said, 'to remove Sir Edward's note, and only unfortunate, Agnes, that it was not taken sooner.'

"'What note?' said I, forgetting even at the moment I had found addressed to him; but almost immediately recollecting it, 'I saw but one,' I began, and then checked myself, for the idea of recrimination with a beloved husband was not, I thought, for a moment to be indulged. A vague suspicion, however, now took possession of my mind. Was it not possible, I began to ask myself, that De Meurville, suspecting I had the Countess's note in my possession, adopted all this appearance of indignation and jealousy, to ward off the reproaches he might anticipate it would occasion him? That this idea, though unjustified by any thing in De Meurville's previous conduct, who, so far from ever endeavouring to conceal his faults from me, was always

the first to confess them, and patient beyond what might be imagined, from the natural pride and impetuosity of his character, in bearing my advice or remonstrances, was not wholly unnatural, must be allowed. Influenced by it, at least, the distress I had hitherto felt gave way to different emotions, of which something like indignation predominated.

"I asked De Meurville in what manner my innocence was to be proved, since he thought proper to doubt my asseverations of it, or was I to remain under the imputation of being such a creature as it was disgrace to be connected with? He replied contemptuously, and again asserting his conviction of my keeping up a correspondence with Sir Edward, and having, at that very moment, knowledge of where the note had been concealed which lay on the ground when first I entered, he rang the bell impatiently for Villars, demanding whether she could give him any information respecting it. The woman looked at first confused, evidently from an uncertainty of whether she was to mention the note she had seen with me, or not; upon De Meurville, however, repeating the question with reiterated violence, she began in an hesitating voice to confess she had, and would have proceeded, had I not, with an emotion of agony, interrupted her: 'Oh! do not say I saw it—do not say I saw it!' I said, 'I will never accuse him!'

"This exclamation, prompted by a dread of De Meurville being brought to shame, would, I thought, by the latter be so interpreted, for that it was to discover the Countess's, and not Sir Edward's note, all this investigation was pursued, he must be aware I could plainly see. Instead, however, of being softened by the consciousness of my forbearance, he seemed, though not so enraged, more distracted than before; and upon Villars' leaving the room, which she almost immediately did, threw himself on a seat and tore his hair, and looked like one who wished himself dead, or never born, or where man nor woman could ever behold him more!

"Affected by his situation, though convinced at the

same time it was rather occasioned by the maddening suggestions of pride, which represented me acquainted with his situation, and, consequently, less likely to esteem him than before, I flew to him, and endeavoured by my caresses and my words to dispel any suspicion he might entertain unfavourable to my affection for him. He listened, and though without, as before, repulsing my embraces, yet evidently writhing under them. I told him he could never have loved me, or he would not have the heart to treat me thus cruelly; that he could not see the woman for whom he had ever felt the affection he once professed for me, in such despair and anguish. 'No! De Meurville, you could not,' I continued; and, as if my words were either too true, or too dreadful, he rushed from my arms: and before I could make an effort to detain him, had quitted the room.

"To what a situation he left me, you may more easily imagine than I describe; for, except that I fell, and that my child screamed, I know nothing. That I was taken to bed, however, I am to suppose from finding myself there when I returned to animation; and there I remained, for the remainder of that evening and the ensuing night, in a state of mind which prevented my having a clear sense of my misery. Judge how confused must be that!

"By morning, however, recollection began to return; and a note from De Meurville, informing me he should set out with the Emperor on his tour, which was to commence that morning, brought me to a full sense of all I had suffered, and all I was yet to feel. He had made up his mind, then, to part from me, which he had hitherto been incapable of doing, and that for months, without one expression of regret, one apparent pang, for all the woes he must know he was leaving me to endure.

"'Oh! De Meurville,' I exclaimed, 'what can have so completely steeled that heart against me, which was once but too partial and too kind?' That whatever had, however, I must endeavour to recover it, became appa-

rent to me ; for, unkind as Clifford was, without him I could not live.

"As the first step, therefore, I determined on keeping the appointment which I had previously made with my brother for that evening, and, by inducing him to come forward, remove the only ground of suspicion I allowed feasible against me—that of being seen with a picture ; which, if De Meurville did not recognise for Sydney's, it became almost immaterial whether it was or not. Accordingly, therefore (and desiring Villars, who had kept up the whole communication between myself and my brother, to watch from a window, in case any circumstance should bring De Meurville back, and give me signal of it), I set out ; and, as I approached the garden, the place in which it had been arranged we should meet, I had the pleasure of perceiving my brother was already come. It was so dusk, however, that I could only discover the outlines of his figure, and that, as I drew nearer to him, he extended his arms.

"Scarcely, however, had they met my touch, accompanied by an exclamation of 'My dearest, loveliest sister !' before I heard a signal from the window ; and with only time to say, 'Will you not return with me ? do, do ! in mercy, do !' to which he replied by an emphatic 'Never, never !' and instant retreat, I flew towards the house, hoping that, as my errand had proved unsuccessful, I might be able to accomplish entering it without De Meurville's knowledge, for, that it was he who had returned, I made no doubt. Delusive hope ! however. Scarcely had I proceeded a hundred yards, before, wild, as if he had but just been let loose from a madhouse, De Meurville himself rushed upon me.

"'What would you do ?' I cried, catching his arm, which was evidently raised in desperation.

"'Pursue the wretch, Madam,' replied he, 'with whom you have dared to keep an appointment !'

"'Have mercy, have mercy !' I cried ; but throwing me from him, he swore he would have none.

"'Oh De Meurville,' said I, 'it is my brother !' But heedless of my words, he rushed forward, and

animated by despair, I flew towards the house screaming, and calling for assistance. At length it came, and though unable to speak, I pointed towards the direction which I wished them to take, pursuing for some time the same myself. Night, however, came on, and I was compelled to return, awaiting at home the result of the others' pursuit. At length it was announced to me they had overtaken the Count, and joined with him for some time in pursuit, but unable to come up with the object of it, De Meurville had insisted on their returning, and taking to horse himself, set out in some other direction. This information was a relief to me, as well as the conviction Villars repeatedly expressed—that her master would never be able to overtake, or if he did, to discover my brother, for that the latter had told her himself, he kept for particular reasons at present, such a constant change of disguise and abode, as would prevent any penetration detecting him. Three weeks have now elapsed, as I commenced by telling my dear Catharine since these events took place, and my seeing De Meurville. Upon them, and him, I feel myself unequal to making any comment, but shall conclude, imploring you immediately to write to me, and candidly to declare to me, whether you think the magnitude of my offences have justified the enormity of my punishment! If you do, little wonder that De Meurville should—but you cannot, no, you cannot! Farewell, believe me, as ever,

AGNES DE MEURVILLE."

What a torrent of elucidation, as of indignation, was this letter the occasion of to the Count De Meurville! In a moment, all Agnes's apparently mysterious conduct was explained, and her having some bitter enemy apparent. As the one who had already caused them so much wo, De Meurville's suspicions instantaneously fell upon Annette Dettinghorff; but then the heavy punishment she had endured for her previous conduct, as well as the certainty, as De Meurville supposed, of her being in America, to which country every

inquiry confirmed the report of her having fled, almost immediately after the Count and Countess's coming to Germany, made it appear improbable that she should again engage in scenes similar to those which had already cost her so much. One thing, however, was apparent, that whoever had been the instigator of this vile plot, Villars had been a principal accomplice in it. Her persuading the Countess that her brother was in Vienna, her accomplishing the former's meeting a person under the idea that it was him, was all evidently a preconcerted thing, planned to involve Agnes in an appearance of guilt.

She must also, De Meurville now began to conceive, have changed the picture he had first seen with his wife, for the other with which he had found the letter, and thrown in the way of Agnes the note, which, from conceiving it addressed to her husband, had nearly deprived her of life. Why, however, the name of the Countess de Soissons should have been adopted, unless, indeed, that lady had some participation in the whole, seemed strange ; but the moment the possibility of her having, crossed De Meurville's mind, and some accompanying recollections made it appear not impossible, he started from the seat on which he was sitting, and without allowing himself one moment for deliberation, rushed towards the apartment of the Countess De Soissons ; the door was half open, and shutting it after him, he entered wild and breathless, and threw himself upon a chair.

Amazed, from the total unprecedentedness of such a proceeding, the Countess, who was in dishabille, started as though she had seen a phantom, and stood looking at him for a moment in stupified astonishment ; recovering herself, however, and snatching up a shawl to throw around her, with a faint attempt at coquetry, she demanded to what she was indebted for the honour of this visit ?

" To my rage, my misery, my madness, my despair ! " returned the Count, in broken, and almost unintelligible accents.

"Oh! do not talk so! what can be the cause?" returned she, "is the Countess De Meurville dying?"

"Dying! ah, too true!" exclaimed the Count, clasping his hands, in wild and agonized emotion.

"But is it any thing immediate? Is she worse just now?" inquired the Countess.

"She is worse every hour, she is dying before my eyes!" said the Count, "and it is I, who they have made to kill her, I—who would cherish her with my heart's blood—whose life was never valuable to me, but in the moments in which it was ministering to hers."

"Of whom is it you speak?" inquired the Countess, her colour, already pale, now assuming a livid hue, and her voice trembling with agitation.

"Perhaps of you!" said the Count, and starting up, he caught her hands. She screamed, her shawl fell off, her hair floated wild about her shoulders. She looked, and wished to look, like one about to be insulted.

"You need not fear," said he, her emotion rendering him calm, "I shall not hurt you, Countess De Soissons, or if I do, it will be in a part, I suspect, least vulnerable, your heart."

"What do you mean," said she, endeavouring to release her hands from him, and resisting his efforts to seat her.

"I mean," said the Count, "if I can command myself," and hesitating, he appeared struggling to quell his agitation, "to speak calmly to you, and—instead of with the indignation and horror my heart would dictate towards the woman of whom I entertain suspicions such as I do of you—with the forbearance which that blessed angel, whom I am losing for ever, would dictate, and he who is greater than my heart, approve."

The Countess *affected*, but did not *look*, total ignorance of his meaning. A streak of burning red was frightfully contrasted with the saturnine hue of her complexion; and in her glaring and unsettled eye, De Meurville read agitation and guilt.

"You have no chance of mercy from me," said he, "but by sincerity; render it magnanimity then by its

instantaneousness, and tell me, Countess de Soissons, whether you have not, in concert with others, formed a plot against the peace and happiness of my wife?"

"Of your wife, Count De Meurville!" said she, her voice almost refusing to give utterance to the words, "what a strange accusation! What should have induced me?"

"That," said De Meurville, averting his eyes from the depraved expression of hers, and casting them upwards, "is known to your own heart alone; but can you deny that you wrote, or allowed to have been written in your name, a note, purporting to come from yourself to me?"

"I *do* deny it," said she.

"And yet you had better be careful," he replied; "there is, we both know, in this house a person whom, if you condescend to falsehood, I can very easily compel to truth."

"What! Villars," cried the Countess, and she screamed.

"Yes, Villars," replied the Count, without appearing to be surprised at the agitation that name created in her, though it was in reality the first confirmation to him of her guilt.

"What! will she betray me?" said the Countess.

"She will," returned De Meurville, "unless you betray yourself; but I am convinced you will. You may have been seduced into the most heartless, but I cannot think will, through fear, into the most despicable of crimes. In endeavouring to persuade the Countess De Meurville—as a retrospection of your conduct convinces me you did—into an idea that you were beloved by me, you acted a part which, if she had been in health, and equal in spirit to yourself, would have been contemptible and wicked, as calculated to produce misery between us; but which, considering the state she was in, was so savage and dreadful, that I dare not trust myself to reflect upon it. Make, however, the only atonement in your power—confess by what, and

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by whom, you were instigated—and I can, yes, I think I can, forgive you.”

Almost before he had finished speaking, the Countess had flown to the other end of the room, and fell at his feet, presenting him with a letter.

“Read there,” said she, “my temptation, my justification, and my condemnation.”

De Meurville took it from her, but, as he did so, he held one hand across his eyes, as if to shut out her hateful image.

“You abhor me! you loath me!” said she, perceiving it; “and yet,” the words seemed to die away upon her lips, “I love you,” at length she said, “beyond this world, and all that it contains.”

“You do!” said he, starting up, “and to prove it, you destroyed the creature upon whom all my hopes here and hereafter hung.”

“No, I did not; or, if I did, the crime was but half my own: ’twas a demon in a woman’s form that tempted me; ’twas an angel in a man’s that still encouraged me. De Meurville, till I knew Annette Dettinghorff (he started at the name,) I did not know of your being in existence, for I have passed all my life, until within these few months, in France; till I saw yourself I did not think there existed a heart which I could not entangle, without affecting my own: you, however, were to teach me the contrary. I came here, I own, at the instigation of Mademoiselle Dettinghorff, who had previously described to me the series of artifice she had practised upon you; how she had bribed one of the attendants of the Countess to leave in her apartments notes written in reality by herself, but, to all appearance, by others; how she had even had miniatures taken in England for your deception, one of a former lover of the Countess De Meurville, the other of her brother; but I need not describe to you,” she continued, perceiving De Meurville’s look of agony, “all her artifices; you are now aware of them, and, heaven knows, have suffered by them. Suffice it to say, that she did not think the Countess De Meurville sufficiently mise-

nable until she had had ocular demonstration of an attachment which, I give you my honour, it was a surprise to me to learn that she had even been led to entertain a suspicion of ; for, so far from having written the note which you alluded to, and which I myself have since seen, I did not, at the time, know of its being in existence. For the purpose, however, of supplanting the Countess in your affections, or rather of appearing to her to have done so, for Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe did not think, though my vanity led me, that to do so in reality was practicable ; I accomplished getting myself invited on a visit here, and, from the moment of my arrival, commenced my manœuvring. Though to detach your affections in reality from the Countess De Meurville, would, I soon found, be impossible ; to succeed in persuading her that I had done so, might, I thought not : for that purpose, therefore, I hit on various trifling expedients, which recollection may now recall to your memory."

"I presume," said De Meurville, "that inducing me to sit for my picture, under the idea that it was to form one in a group of figures you were painting for the Countess's boudoir, was one?"

"Ah ! De Meurville," said she, "it was ; and my compelling you to secrecy only a stratagem, to make the circumstance of our being so often together, appear more suspicious to the Countess."

"Unhappy Agnes !" involuntarily exclaimed the Count, "What did she do to deserve all the malignity that was exercised against her ? I believe her only crime was that of her being my wife ?"

"And was not that, think you," said the Countess, "the greatest of which she could be guilty ?"

"In the eyes of a mean, envious, paltry spirited woman, I now feel it was."

"Rather say, De Meurville, of a guilty, wounded, jealous, and adoring one ; had Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe loved you less, she would have regarded your Agnes more."

"No, she is a fiend, a devil," returned he, passion-

ately, "and regards nothing on earth but herself; but I will yet make her tremble; I will yet make her rue the hour in which she aimed her demoniac machinations at the life of my unfortunate girl!"

"And me—to what fate shall you consign me?" inquired the Countess.

"You have, to a degree, expiated your offences," said he, "by your confession; and I shall only ask that we may never meet again."

"De Meurville," cried she, wildly, "I have more than expiated them; I have, by their commission, fixed on myself a misery for life, which no time can remove, and no distance ameliorate. In endeavouring to engage your heart, I for ever lost my own! and I had not been two days in your society, before I felt that the accomplishment of all my proudest, vainest, hopes in this life, would afford me less satisfaction than the obtaining of one look which I had reason to think proceeded from the affection of your heart."

"Upon what foundation," involuntarily uttered the Count, "did you rest your hopes of happiness?"

"Upon a groundless one indeed, De Meurville," replied she, "none could have beheld you with the Countess and doubted that, but the very circumstance which annihilated my hopes increased my love; and if you were dear to me when alone, or in company with others, you were to me, by the side of your wife, an object so passionately beloved, that I often felt as if infatuation would drive me to a confession of it in her presence."

"But what, for Heaven's sake," interrupted the Count, rising and trying to release himself from her, "do you promise yourself by this avowal? It is overwhelming me with shame, and one would think ought yourself also."

"No I glory in it, I glory in it," said she; "for you are worthy to be loved beyond what ever man was, and I would rather be the Countess De Meurville, were she poor, titleless, and unportioned, yet still able to call her

child your child, and *her* home *your* home, than the greatest princess upon earth."

"Then fly me," said the Count, "as you would contagion, let the same place never more contain us."

"Or rather," said the Countess, "let it contain us for ever; let me follow you as your slave, your attendant, your most menial servant, too happy to perform for you the lowest of their offices."

"You are mad," said he, endeavouring to release himself from her and gain the door.

"No, De Meurville, I am not," said she, "and it is a relief to my breaking heart to tell you what I feel;—I envy the ground on which you walk, the lifeless things on which you look, the meanest creature admitted to your presence. Happy are thy men! happy are thy servants who are continually before thee! Confer on me, then, the only distinction I aspire to, that of being numbered among them."

"You know not what you ask!" exclaimed De Meurville, and relasing himself from her embraces, he left her.

In a state of mind almost as agitated as before, did De Meurville return to the room he had left, and, ringing the bell, desired that Villars should be sent for. She did not immediately appear, and thinking there might be some delay before she did, De Meurville opened and read the letter given to him by the Countess De Soissons. It was from Annette Dettinghorffe, and evidently in answer to one in which the former had requested a particular account of her previous proceedings with the Countess De Meurville; for, after applauding her friend's manœuvring, who, it was evident from Mademoiselle's allusions, had given her a detailed account of it, and refreshing the Countess's memory with recollection of the reward that would be attendant on her success, Annette proceeded to give an exact description of the whole previous plot, transcribing the letters she had made to appear coming from Sir Edward Aubrey and Sir Sydney Mandeville, as well as that she had feigned to be from the Countess herself.

Altogether this letter would serve for as clear a development to Agnes of all that had influenced De Meurville's conduct as could be conceived—and re-sealing and writing upon it in French, "If my sweet Agnes can read this, it will account to her for all her husband's apparently inhuman conduct; if not, his tears, his agonies, his remorse, must speak his vindication, for his lips cannot;" he desired Shelbourne, an attendant of the Countess's, who had come in a few minutes before to announce that Villars could not be found and had apparently fled, to take it to her Lady.

The woman obeyed, but almost immediately returned; the Countess, she said, was at present sleeping, and she could only lay the letter beside her.

Glad for the first time of a reprieve from her beloved presence, De Meurville threw himself on a sofa, and, after desiring it to be announced that he should not appear at dinner, endeavoured, by remaining quiet and alone, to still the throbbings of his head and heart.

To do so, however, was difficult, considering the cause that occasioned their agitation; and whether De Meurville dwelt upon the present or the past, he thought he should lose his senses. The idea of what Agnes had been unjustly made to suffer, of the state to which it had reduced her, of the unhappy though never upbraiding expression he had been the cause of occasioning that sweet face to wear, all now came before him with accusing bitterness; and though he had done nothing to deserve such self-condemnation, the recollection of her tenderness, her caresses, her gentleness, all distracted him. He fancied that he had never been sufficiently sensible to them, and felt that he should never enjoy them again.

Half maddened in short by his own meditations, De Meurville at the end of about two hours, started up, and determined, whether she was sleeping or waking, to be once more and for ever with the Countess. Fortunately for his intention Shelbourne entered at that moment, to announce that her Lady had risen, and wished to see him.

"Risen!" repeated the Count, the first ray of real

pleasure that had for months lighted up his countenance illuming it at that moment : " She finds herself better then ? "

" Yes, much better," returned the woman, and before she had finished speaking, De Meurville had flown towards the apartment of his wife.

The door was partly open, he entered, he extended his arms ; she rose, she sprung, she clung to his embraces. All the pure, eloquent blood of her attenuated form seemed kindled in her cheeks by the exertion, and she looked so beautiful, so unearthly, that overcome by the emotion her appearance inspired, De Meurville burst into tears.

" Clifford, my love," said she, clasping him closer to her, " I must not see you thus ; " and they sat down together on the sofa, and she endeavoured by her caresses, and whispers of tenderness to compose him ; but he could not for a while speak ; at length falling at her feet he said, " However you may have forgiven me, Agnes, I never, never can forgive myself, for my cruel, savage, unnatural—"

" De Meurville ! " cried she, interrupting him, " this is the only language I will never hear from *your* lips. Throughout the whole of the sad event, which we have both so much reason to deplore, you acted as I believe no other man upon earth (entertaining similar impressions) would have done, and not even in the first moments of indignation betraying the violence of resentment, which your natural pride and spirit must have rendered it impossible for you not to feel, returned almost immediately to my arms ; and, forgetting apparently in my declining health every source of disquietude I had occasioned you, or prompted by your noble nature to forgive it, behaved towards me rather like an angel than a man."

" Oh ! Agnes ! " said De Meurville, " who but yourself would thus acquit me, not my own heart,"—and, affected by a thousand recollections, De Meurville clung closer to her. " My dearest, dearest creature," he continued to repeat, " if you are but spared to me,

about nothing on earth will I repine, but pass my whole life in atoning for that of yours, which I embittered. I will take you to every clime, to every country, they tell me likely to restore you, and know not rest or peace, till I see you regain strength—

‘Ask but at morn’s returning ray,  
If thou hast health, that I may bless the day.’”

“Who had ever,” said Agnes, regarding him, “so dear an incentive to live? But, my own Clifford,” she presently continued, putting her lips to his cold forehead, on which the hair even now hung in beautiful and unarranged confusion, “to see these sweet locks of yours once more attended to, as if you had some art in their adjustment, and this dear face wear an air of cheerfulness and joy, would be the most effectual remedy I could know.”

“Would it?” said De Meurville, a gleam of their former animation stealing through the sweet eyes, which were rivetted on hers, “then if you begin to recover, I, my dear Agnes, will begin to look happier.”

Overcome altogether, by the tenderness of his manner, the tears which had long trembled in the eyes of the Countess, now trickled down her cheeks, “I cannot but recover,” said she, “when you are so kind!” and they were again in each other’s arms, and he vowed never more to give her one cause for sorrow or uneasiness; and she promised to be all and every thing he could desire. In fact, misfortune had improved the characters of the Count and Countess De Meurville, and while it had rendered him less haughty, less impetuous, more forbearing, it had exterminated every inclination to vanity and coquetry in her heart.

Enjoying the bliss of each other’s society, relieved from all those suspicions which had for so long a time past embittered it, the Count and Countess De Meurville still continued, when they heard the sound of a carriage driving from the court-yard. “Who can it be,” said Agnes, and she went over to the window to look, but the darkness prevented her from being able to

ascertain, and one of the attendants just then entering with coffee, they learned from her, that it was the Countess De Soissons who had departed.

"I hope you will not have to answer for her dying of a broken heart, Clifford," said the Countess, as soon as the woman had left the room: he faintly smiled, but turning over the pages of a book which lay near Agnes, seemed unwilling, by speaking of the Countess De Soissons in the only way in which he could *think*, to agitate her or himself.

"Do you conceive there is danger?" whispered she, kissing the long fringed eye-lids, which were still wet with tears; and raising them, De Meurville was about to reply to her, but a note from the palace, just then brought in to him, contained a request that he would, if it were possible, come to the Emperor for a few minutes. Accordingly, the Count was compelled to obey, and, however reluctantly, exchange for a while the company of his wife for that of his sovereign.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

"If me thou view with haughty eyes,  
Or with a more humane disguise,  
Yet is, alas! thy proud disdain,  
As is thy favour, likewise vain.  
Those rosy lips have now no more  
The power that they had before,  
And even thy eyes, with all their art,  
Have lost the way to touch my heart."

METASTASIO.

THE commencement of March found the Marquess and Marchioness of Glenallan still at their castle in Scotland, which they had not left, with the exception of a few weeks during the latter's confinement, since their return from abroad.

The ill health of the Marquess, and the embarrassments in which Lady Glenallan's unbounded extrava-



gance had involved his fortune, were the circumstances which on his side induced this seclusion ; but on hers it was only submitted to, from a consciousness, that to part from her husband at this exact period would confirm every report that might be afloat respecting her and Lord Arabin, and therefore, with a sullenness which bore ominous foreboding of soon bursting forth into a dreadful storm. Nothing perhaps but principle, a sense of the mortification it would inflict upon her parents, and a consciousness of his own declining health, which threatened soon to reduce him to a state in which every thing would become indifferent, prevented Lord Glenallan from seeking for a separation from his wife ; for her temper had become such, as to render it a hell on earth to be connected with her. Not condescending to mix with a creature around, yet for ever reviling the hateful solitude to which she was condemned, the Marquess heard of nothing from morning to night but her discontents, and persecuted with her company, which she was too well versed in the arts of tormenting to spare him, he began literally to wish for that death, which she, without whom he once fancied he could never endure life ! would, he foresaw, soon occasion him. It was about the time of this wretched state of things, that Mr. Douglas (the Marquess's nephew) came for a few days on a visit to the castle. He brought with him a letter, which, directed to London, had been left at the Marquess's house by a private hand, which, as the latter perceived upon opening it, was from the Earl Arabin, written apparently merely to prove that they had not been forgotten : it contained but little news, he and his sister, with her husband, and an addition to their party, in the shape of an English gentleman and his daughter, were stopping at present in Turkey, from which country they should proceed to visit the Holy Land, and consequently not perhaps return to England for many months. That whenever they did, however, the again meeting all their friends would prove a high source of gratification, which the Earl expressed in his usual flattering manner, though not altogether

with that peculiar earnestness which would have delighted Lady Glenallan; he however desired to be remembered to her and the heir apparent, in a manner which proved he had neither forgotten her, nor him who had frequently been the innocent vehicle of their communications: said, he should certainly bring her, without commission, shawls, and fans, and shells, and berries, and all that ladies long for from the east; while for his friend Montalpine, he would procure a branch of coral, that should rival the bit hung with silver, he used to be so fond of.

"I suppose," said Douglas, as soon as the Marquess had finished the letter, to which, though she did not deign to appear to do so, the Marchioness was in reality paying great attention, "that we shall soon hear of his Lordship's wedding some Circassian fair; don't you think so, Lady Glenallan?"

She bit her lips, till all her colour seemed collected in them, and replied, "She did'nt know."

"O yes," continued Douglas, keeping his eyes fixed upon her, "it would be a novelty so worthy of a wild eccentric man like Lord Arabin. Don't you think it would, my Lord?" appealing to his uncle. "To have a Circassian wife?" The Marquess smiled, but left the room without replying.

"You could not," said Lady Glenallan, laughing contemptuously, "have selected a person more totally uninterested in any thing that concerns Lord Arabin and his family, than your uncle. I believe he detests them from his soul."

"Has he any reason?" asked Mr. Douglas, in what might be construed rather a dubious tone.

"Oh not that I am aware of, I am sure," replied she, quickly, and as if the question implied suspicion. "On the contrary, they were always particularly civil to him; latterly more so than to me."

"You were too handsome for Lady Isabel," said he. "Two suns could not shine together."

The Marchioness smiled, "My sun," said she, looking drearily around her, "would no longer be an object

of danger to her now. It is, I believe, fast setting for ever."

Mr. Douglas laughed, "Setting suns," said he, "will rise in glory. But why don't you go to London?"

"Ask Lord Glenallan that?" replied she, bitterly.

"No: if you did," said he, "looking just (as the time was) when you did upon him. He'd say, he only waited your commands to set out."

"But I never will condescend," said she, to look upon him in the manner I understand you to mean. He has acted in a thousand respects cruelly towards me; and in keeping me here at present, in the way he does; secluded from all society, in a manner which he dare not act if my parents were in England to witness it."

Mr. Douglas attempted to say something in defence of the Marquess, that though particular circumstances might prevent his wishing to go up to London at present, he could not but be desirous she should avail herself of any amusement or society the country might afford her.

"Oh, without doubt, Mr. Douglas," returned she, quickly. "If I could find any amusement in accompanying my Lord in a fox-chase, or remaining by the hour upon a race-ground, standing in a deserted ball-room, lit up with tallow-candles, or stared at in an assembly-room, jostled by greasy squires, I am very sure he would be good enough to indulge me. Nay, perhaps if I solicited the honour of the country apothecary's dining at my table, and the country curate's sitting beside him, he would not be cruel enough to refuse me, nor think the favour too much enhanced by allowing their wives to accompany them? but—" as unable to keep up the attempt at irony any longer, all her proud blood mounted to her face. "Is that I should be glad to know any species of society for me?—for the daughter of one of the oldest, and the wife of one of the noblest peers in England?"

Mr. Douglas confessed it was not, but also expressed his conviction that it was such as she had never come

in contact with. "Among the families of the surrounding nobility," said he, "though their residences are at some distance, you might make out society nearer your own level, and find out people who would serve agreeably to diversify the monotony of your life."

"I think," said Lady Glenallan coldly, "it rather remains with them to solicit my acquaintance, than with me to seek theirs." Mr. Douglas thought just the contrary. "But have they made no attempt?" he inquired archly.

"I believe they have left their cards. But really—" she presently and pettishly continued, while he, out of a purely good motive, was endeavouring to devise how he could most unoffendingly introduce to her comprehension that something farther on her part was requisite—"really, Mr. Douglas, I have not patience to hear you talk—to suppose that I could find any pleasure in keeping up a stupid interchange of dinner visits and running calls, billeting myself by the week at people's houses, and expecting them in return to make an hotel of mine—I, who have been always accustomed to move in the circle of a court!—I, who have entertained the Majesty of Britain! No, the idea is too ridiculous!"

Happily, Mr. Douglas's horse, which he had ordered for riding, was just now announced, and wishing the Marchioness good morning, he left her.

The conversation we have related, however, was only the first of several which he held with her Ladyship on the same subject; and principally brought to the castle by a hope that, from being a favourite with each, he might be instrumental in reconciling the unhappy differences which subsisted between Lord and Lady Glenallan, he did not quit till convinced that any hopes founded on that expectation were vain: Lady Glenallan's heart, whatever it might once have been, was now, he felt, so thoroughly unamiable, that even to suppose it devotedly attached to Lord Arabin (as the world would make it out,) seemed paying too great a compliment to it. She was, he felt, a heartless, selfish, un-

feeling creature ; and that the Marquess had thrown himself away upon one who, except when he could be ministering to her vanity or pride, knew not what it was to be happy or contented.

Perhaps, however, had even Lady Glenallan, unfeeling as she was, known altogether how near her husband was to his end, she would not have treated him in the manner she had done ; nor replied, with such indignation, to Mr. Douglas's parting entreaty, that she would show something more of consideration and forbearance towards his uncle. No ! policy would have forbid it ; for the creature, so regardless of his life, was yet dependent on his bounty !

Sitting one evening, after dinner, over their wine, the silence only interrupted by the cracking of the wood-fire, and the rattling of the rain, the Marquess and Marchioness were brought in their letters, which always arrived about that time, and generally proved a happy relief ; for, let the contents be even unpleasant, they occasioned a debate, and that to Lady Glenallan was better than, what was sure to have preceded, a state of inaction. Upon this evening, however, one of them was to produce consequences for which even the Marchioness would not have bargained, and to which she would most probably have preferred an eternal silence.

After reading, the Marquess, with a look of at once such mingled scorn and agony as she had never before seen him wear, threw her a letter. " I find," said she, struggling to speak, rather with the calmness of contempt, than with the emotion of grief, " that where I only believed you amiable and unfeeling, Madam, I did not know you."

She took the letter, her crimsoning colour betraying suspicion of its contents, and the flash of indignation, she would have darted upon her Lord, falling powerless upon it.

" It is a vile fabrication, however !" as soon as she had read the first few lines, she cried, and then glancing at the name of Wandesmere, with which it was signed.

"and worthy of the base inventor," she continued, flinging it on the table.

The Marquess put his hand to his forehead : "I am not equal to such a scene," said he ; "my death-blow is struck !"

"A scene, indeed, my Lord !" repeated she, starting up, "and do you think I will allow my character to be vilified by any impudent, artful woman, who dares to write to you, making such assertions, without attempting to vindicate myself? No, indeed !" and putting herself in a defying attitude, "She dare," she continued, quoting from the words of the letter, "to assert, that the child of which I was confined last December, in Edinburgh, was Lord Arabin's, and not yours ! Insolent woman ! she shall suffer for her impertinence. But is it possible, my Lord," she continued, perceiving the Marquess was not about to speak, "is it possible that you can be infatuated enough to believe such assertions ?"

"I could believe any thing of you !" said he.

Infuriated, she sprang towards him. "You shall have reason then !" said she—he caught her hands, she wrenched them from him—"You shall repent this !" she said. He made an effort to get at the bell-rope, but she saw his intention, and before he was aware, tore them both down. "Rage, storm, be ever so indignant," cried she, "you shall have no escape !" and while literally terrified by her violence, the Marquess stood looking aghast at her, she rushed from the room, and locking and double locking the door, desired no servant, on pain of instant dismissal, to attempt the opening it.

Though determined to give the Marquess a serious annoyance without exactly leaving him entirely, which, while it certainly would not do the former, might prove a dangerous step for herself, the Marchioness hesitated for a while in what manner best to effect it. Recollecting at length, however, that upon that night there was to be a ball held at the county town, which was about sixteen miles off, she determined, unaccompanied,

and in the midst of the pouring rain, to attend it. Ordering, therefore, the carriage, and four horses, to the great indignation of her fine-bred London footmen and coachman, she dressed herself in a splendid manner, and twenty minutes after she had left the dining-room in a rage, was upon her way to A——, prepared to fascinate male, and mortify female hearts. Previous to going, however, she consigned the key of the dining-room door to her maid, desiring it should be opened as soon as it appeared probable that she had cleared the Park and its vicinity.

Though freer from timidity than the generality of women, as Lady Glenallan approached the town of A—— she began to feel some slight degree of nervous apprehension. The possibility of there being no person of sufficient rank in the rooms for her to send in for, alarmed her—and either to enter by herself, or instead of going in at all, to put up at the inn, would be dreadful alternatives.

Relying, however, on her customary good fortune, she presently banished her fears, and inquiring, as soon as they stopped, if Lord Aberfoyle (a nobleman with whom she was slightly acquainted) was there, heard to her great delight he was; and sending in her compliments with a request to see him, she awaited in an anti-room his Lordship's coming out. It was not long deferred, and unbounded expressions of pleasure and surprise on his side at seeing her, and apologies and explanations on Lady Glenallan's, for its being under circumstances so extraordinary, were terminated by a request from her Ladyship, that he would be good enough to lead her into the ball-room. With all the satisfaction of a man, aware of having consigned to his care something precious and enviable, his Lordship obeyed; and amidst murmurs of surprise, admiration, and what—inclining to both—partook more of the nature of contempt, Lady Glenallan, hanging on his arm, walked up the room.

“Is any thing particular going to be to-night, that

we are honoured with the Marchioness' presence?" soon became the prevailing whisper.

"Oh, I am sure I don't know!" replied ladies, annoyed that she should have fixed upon that very evening for coming, upon which, reckoning on the rain keeping half the people away, they had ventured in their soiled silks, and laces; "it is only a whim, I suppose."

"I think it would have been more consistent with etiquette," observed an old Lady, "if she had announced her intention a few days before."

"Etiquette, my dear Madam!" replied another, "Lady Glenallan is vastly superior to etiquette."

"And somewhat to propriety too, I think," observed a gentleman, who, standing at the lower end of the room, was regarding her Ladyship's laughing and talking with some men of rank and fashion, with whom she was in a moment surrounded.

"What do you think she says, Miss Stopford?" drawled a fashionably dressed young man, sauntering towards the gentleman and lady we have alluded to, "Why, that she has left her *caro sposo* in a perfect fury at her coming out. Is'nt that good?" "A very pretty confession indeed!" observed the gentleman drily, "I know if I were Lady Glenallan, I should be ashamed to make it."

"No! you can't possibly tell what you would be ashamed of if you were such a pretty creature," returned the other affectedly: "but see, she's going to dance. Miss Stopford may I have the honour—" bowing to her—"there's no hurry however," he continued languidly, seeing her loosening from her father's arm, "we will fall in down here directly. In the mean time, let us look on at this lovely creature—It is quite a novelty to have a glimpse of her!"

"She is very graceful," observed Miss Stopford.

"Graceful! Oh, but another name for grace!"

"It's a stand-off sort," observed Colonel Stopford; "she is a queen *condescending* to dance with her subjects; however, if you don't take care, Mr. Campbell,



you'll miss the honour of a touch or a smile, and all that I dare say you value." He bowed, and led Miss Stopford to a place.

"Upon my word," said the latter, somewhat piqued at his attention being so entirely taken up with the Marchioness, "we humbler planets have no reason to hail Lady Glenallan's appearance amongst us, if she engrosses all gentlemen's notice, as much as she does yours, Mr. Campbell!"

He laughed affectedly, "You are really too good, Miss Stopford," said he, "to make our notice of any consequence to you; but do you suppose, that my looking so much at Lady Glenallan is really induced—"

"Only by her being the most beautiful woman in the room," interrupted the young lady.

"No, no, I'll not allow it; there are many here just as handsome, though of a different style; Lady Glenallan's a splendid auburn—a sun-setting beauty, if you can take the idea—and that in our northern clime, is very uncommon; but see Lady Catherine Dalkeith, see Lady Flora Mortlock, the one with glossy raven, the other with golden hair, they are equally lovely, though so unlike the Marchioness; and last, not least, see yourself," he whispered, as they divided, he to turn Lady Glenallan, she Lord Aberfoyle. After going down a single dance, which was all she did, the Marchioness, surrounded by gentlemen prepared to admire and re-echo every thing that fell from her lips, amused herself by looking at, and criticising the company: "What a plain girl that is! and what a dressed up woman that; really she'd not be bad looking, if a little attended to! and he might be passable, if not so insufferably affected," were remarks which, regardless whether they wounded or not, she made within hearing of those of whom they were spoken. In the midst, however, of these agreeable sallies, and about an hour after her being in the ball-room, there arrived an express from Glenallan castle: it announced that the Marquess was dangerously ill, and desired her immediate return. Convinced that it was only a pretext,

she refused to stir ; and another, and another messenger arrived, reporting him still worse and worse, without her paying any attention, till an actual announcement that he was dying, made her hesitate, and looking at a lady who, heartless and unfeeling as herself, had been forward in confirming her in the suspicion of its being a stratagem, " I think I must go," said she.

" Lady Glenallan, you ought," repeated a voice behind her, and though she could not discern the speaker, something ominous in the tones decided her. Keeping up to the last an appearance of spirit, and affectation of total disbelief of any thing being the matter, she yet grew pale as death, and when Lord Aberfoyle was putting her into the carriage, requested him, in a voice scarcely audible, to desire the coachman to drive home as fast as possible. The wings of Pegasus could scarce have imparted more swiftness, than that with which the animals flew ; over hill and dale like deer they bounded, and Lady Glenallan found herself entering the park-gates, before she thought it possible they could have proceeded half so far.

Without approaching the Castle, however, other emotions than those of extreme anxiety to reach it began to take possession of the Marchioness, and terror, shame, remorse, were all more prominent sensations. If Lord Glenallan were indeed dying, what a wretch must she appear, not only in mankind's eyes, but in her own ! Oh, the very towers, through whose princely portals she was now about to enter, seemed to reproach her ; they were his gift, in company with whom she never more might view them, and how had she repaid his generosity ! by conduct so unworthy as to make her shrink from the eyes of the attendants, who, anxious to learn respecting their Lord, were collected in the halls and antichambers through which she had to pass.

Scarce did Lady Glenallan dare to ask how the Marquess now was, and when at length she did, it was in a voice hardly audible. How changed were all the circumstances under which the Marchioness first stood upon the spot on which she now did ! so much so, as

to strike even upon the senses of those present ; they could not forget the beautiful, blushing bride, who, two years before, had been requested by their lord to pause for one moment there, that his people might look upon her ; and as Lady Glenallan proceeded to her Lord's apartment, more than one reverted to the evening of her first arrival at the Castle.

"Well I recollect it," exclaimed the old housekeeper, "and through this very room my lady passed, looking more like an angel than a woman."

"She was a lovely, lovely creature," said they all, "and is,—and might have been the best and happiest that ever Scotland saw ! but somehow she and my Lord did not get on together, and his loving her so much was, I verily believe, what made her love him so little, but it ought not to have been so, and she'll yet weep that it was."

In the mean time the Marchioness entered the apartment where her husband lay. There were some figures about the bed, but a deathlike silence prevailed. He turned his eyes towards her as she approached, but wandering over her glittering dress, they did not immediately rest upon her face ; when they did, however, their reproachful, fixed, unearthly regard alarmed her.

"My Lord, my dear Lord!" said she in faltering accents,—he started—he shrank from the sound of her voice as though it disturbed his dying moments,—that voice to which he had once listened in delight !

"It is my Lady, it is the Marchioness of Glenallan," one of the attendants ventured to observe.

"I hate the very name !" returned the Marquess.

"It is then," exclaimed she, throwing herself on the bed, "Georgiana Granville whom you once loved, that addresses you ! It is the mother of Montalpine, who implores your compassion !"

"You do well," returned he, "to adjure me by the only titles by which you are dear to me ! as Georgiana Granville then, as Montalpine's mother, as his future protector, receive my last blessing and farewell ! Make up to him in all that you have been deficient to me, and

may your conduct as a mother atone for your errors as a wife ! Farewell, most beautiful, and once most beloved of women !”

Lady Glenallan uttered one piercing cry, and falling into a fainting fit, was taken from the room. The Marquess's eyes followed her till she was no longer visible, and then turning to the Clergyman sitting beside him, seemed to express by the look with which he did so, that spiritual consolation might commence, for that he had seen the last of life's most promising illusions !

The customary service was therefore now read, and almost immediately after it, the Marquess became worse and worse. The spasms in his stomach, which had originally succeeded one another with long intervals, now became more constant, and before day dawned he was completely insensible.

For several hours he continued in this state, and happily for himself died at length, unconscious of its not being in the arms, which estranged from him while living, he might yet have supposed would not desert him when dying.

That if she thought he would have been sensible to her presence, and being so would have preferred it, Lady Glenallan would not have refused to be with the Marquess is probable ; but every report made to her represented him insensible, and even imagining him the contrary, she could not suppose her presence likely to convey any thing but remembrances irritating and undesirable. Perhaps her Ladyship judged rightly, and that the bosom in which Lord Glenallan knew himself not to have lived, was not the one, on which he would desire to die. Let that be as it may, however, we shall leave the Marchioness for awhile ; and mistress of every thing that this world holds desirable, our readers may fancy whom, she soon began to feel would heighten every blessing, by being the dear partaker of it.

## CHAPTER XXV.

*"Friends who meet one another in the common course of life,  
Receive but common gladness from their meeting;  
But, from a shipwreck saved,  
We mingle tears with our embraces."*

RESTORED to a blessed conviction of all that could impart happiness to either, the Count and Countess De Meurville enjoyed, for some months, a felicity which seemed incapable of increase or diminution. Her confinement, which had taken place almost immediately after her leaving Castle Roncévalles, had removed, as sometimes happens, all symptoms of decline from her constitution; and though her child had not survived its birth, Agnes, at about the expiration of a twelve-month from that period, was, from being to every appearance on the verge of death, restored to perfect health.

Dressed one evening for the Opera, to which they were about to go, and only detained from setting out, by reluctance to part, until it was absolutely necessary, with their beautiful boy, who was playing on the carpet beside them, Agnes remarked to her husband that it was upon that day Annette Dettinghorffe, who had been for a year past in confinement, was to be emancipated.

"Are you afraid?" said he, drawing her closer towards him.

"Not when *you* are near me," replied the Countess, "but when you are away, I shall now evermore, be in dread."

De Meurville laughed, "We must be ever together, then," said he, and hiding his face in her bosom, he murmured,

*"My hope, my heaven, my trust, must be  
My gentle guide in following thee."*

Agnes smiled ; and as it was now more than time to set out, gave him, after kissing her child, and consigning it to the nurse, her hand to lead her to the carriage. There was an immense throng around it, all waiting to see the Count and Countess ; but, as De Meurville was putting Agnes in, she started, and uttering a piercing scream, rather fell, than sunk upon the seat. "What's the matter," cried her husband, and receiving no answer, he was, in a moment, beside her. "Oh ! I don't know," said the Countess, a little recovering herself, but still speaking as if life was almost leaving her, "I was so frightened ! I thought, I fancied, De Meurville !"

"What, speak ? tell me, my only love, said he, putting his hand on her beating heart, and sending in the footman, for restoratives. "Oh I fancied," said she, as soon as she could gain breath to speak, "but it might be only fancy, that I felt the people pressing on me, and some one, as it were, endeavouring to make a rush at us." De Meurville did not smile, for Agnes's fears were too genuine to admit of it, but he thought them unfounded, and so he endeavoured to persuade her.

"It must have been your imagination, my love," said he. "You were thinking of what we were talking."

"It might," said she, but it was but faintly, her heart bore testimony to its having been reality.

"Shall we go on ?" said he, "or would you rather that we did not." Agnes was at first about to reply to the latter, but influenced, as she often now was in going out, by a recollection of all the confinement De Meurville had been compelled to, on her account, she presently determined in the affirmative, and observing with a smile, "that she should never have courage to pass that crowd again;" the carriage door was shut, and they drove on.

Though Agnes's vivacity generally rose, and sometimes became more elastic, after any depression, it did not now, and reclining on De Meurville's bosom, she remained silent and thoughtful, except when he spoke

to her, and then replied with all the tenderness and fondness of the most adoring mistress.

The brilliant scenery of the Opera, in a degree dissipated, though it did not altogether remove the depression of her spirits, and returning, she conversed with De Meurville until the carriage stopped, when recalled, apparently by an observation of the mob that was once more collecting around it, to all her former fears, she grew pale as death, and casting a timid look among them, seemed apprehensive of some danger. "You need not fear, my love," said De Meurville, alighting first himself, and then holding out his arms to receive her, but, scarcely were the words said—scarcely had she consigned herself to those beloved arms, when a tumult was observable in the crowd, strange cries arose, and, shrieking with agony, the Countess saw a horrible figure, which afterward proved to be that of the infatuated Annette Dettinghorffe, rush forward and plunge a dagger into the bosom of her husband. "Behold your life, your love!" accompanied with a hideous laugh—were the only words that met her ear. The faint accents of her husband, the screams of the multitude, the reeking blood which bathed her dress, the violence with which she was torn from the arms, that even in apparently approaching death seemed endeavouring to retain her, were all heard and felt in horrible confusion.

The wound, intended to have been mortal, proved indeed severe, though not dangerous, and the Count, attended unremittingly by his beloved Agnes, and receiving the kind assiduities of Colonel and Mrs. Arlington, who had recently arrived at Vienna, was eventually restored, and gradually, though contrary to all expectation, at length regained, in a great degree, his former health.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"Oh ! I had rather been a slave  
In tears and bondage by his side,  
Than shared in all, if wanting him,  
This world had power to give besides."

ALL her fondest wishes, her most delightful dreams, her most aspiring hopes, were fulfilled ; and one year after the death of the Marquess, found Lady Glenallan the wife of the Earl of Arabin.

Almost immediately after his Lordship's return to England, which had taken place about six months since, he waited on the Marchioness ; and, finding nothing of the impression he had once made upon her diminished by absence, he began to consult his heart, or rather, perhaps, his vanity, whether or not an alliance with her would be desirable : we say his vanity, for that alone could have influenced the result, or induced him to imagine that a union with the Marchioness of Glenallan, however it might make him distinguished, could ever make him happy. If, indeed, Lord Arabin could have been supposed to forget in the beautiful creature, who hanging on all his looks, and interested in all his actions, seemed to prefer their commendation, and his fame, to any admiration with which mankind could honour her, the termagant whom he had often seen casting looks and addressing language towards her husband, that had compelled *him*,—Lord Arabin,—to look down, and blush involuntarily for the effrontery of her sex, and weakness of his own ; it might have appeared less surprising his marrying the Marchioness, for though her fall from virtue might lessen his security on her affection, and respect for her character, yet, as it had been an error into which love for himself had led her, and various sad consequences to her the result, something like compassion and remorse might have been supposed

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to influence him ; but to unite himself to such a vixen, such a fiend in female form, nothing but vanity, suggesting the celebrity likely to ensue from it, could be the inducement. That, whatever it had been, however, Lord Arabin had not been three months married, before he began to conceive it vain and inadequate, is certain.

The temper of the Marchioness, only restrained during the first few weeks of their connexion by the total absence of subjects for provocation as well as by the adoration she bore her husband, became, by the time we have alluded to, violent as formerly ; and though excited indeed by different causes, was of a nature equally repelling, and to a husband who, like Lord Arabin, could only be retained, if at all, by gentleness and forbearance, in the highest degree odious and revolting. He could not have believed, if he had not ocular demonstration, that she could in reality ever behave with such fury and indignation, as, if irritated by jealousy or indifference, she often would towards him, on whom she yet professed to dote : neither, perhaps, had Lady Glenallan imagined that Lord Arabin had a spirit as high as her own, and that he, who, as a lover, was always complaisant, and to remonstrance generally gentle, could be, as a husband, often haughty, and to opposition always impatient. Yet such was in reality the case ; and though from loving her less than she did him, the Earl's happiness was less in her power than hers in his, both were soon completely miserable ; he longed again for that liberty which she, to whom he was daily and hourly reminded of having resigned it, perpetually interfered with his enjoying. Never happy when he was out of her society, yet perpetually driving him from it, the Marchioness's jealousy alternately irritated and amused him. She talked of her rights, and he ridiculed her ; of his ingratitude, and he denied it ; of her love, and he despised her.

From Lord Arabin's lips Lady Glenallan heard truths which she had never heard from others ; and though, not in so many words, that she was no longer the be-

loved wife of the Marquess of Glenallan, but the dependant upon his sovereign will and pleasure, he often gave her reason to remember. Nothing, in short, but love, perhaps, could have induced Lady Glenallan's forbearance, even to the extent to which it was exercised ; for Lord Arabin, so far from conciliating, or being wrought upon even by tenderness and submission, became every day more indifferent to her wishes, and as difficult of courting to her society, as at the time had been when she was to his own.

Things could not go on long in this state, and if any thing could make them worse, it would be the arrival of Lady Isabella Wandesmere in London, which event took place about six months after the Marchioness's marriage.

Graceful and elegant as ever in outward form, Lady Isabel's countenance and person had yet lost that peculiarly seductive expression which had once distinguished it ; and whether it was that the inherent depravity of her nature was becoming less disguised, or from the association she had lately been exposed to with all orders of mankind, her feelings less refined, there was an air of effrontery and independence about her, by no means either fascinating or feminine.

She talked in foreign style, she dressed in foreign fashions, she patronized foreign performances: with women her manners had become forced and constrained, and with men unreserved and unfeminine. The former affected to cry her up more, but it was only because the latter admired her less.

With the Marchioness of Glenallan, as may be imagined, her Ladyship kept up no sort of acquaintance. Her having succeeded in marrying her brother, was a crime only to be expiated by its producing such misery as, assisted by the arts she intended to practise, there seemed little doubt of its doing.

For the purpose of detaching her brother from his wife, she made her house the resort of every thing that from superiority in beauty, talent, rank, or fashion, could prove attractive to him, and throwing in his way women whose sweetness of manner, and serenity of tem-

per, were most unfortunately contrasted to Lady Glenallan's. The Earl fell upon the baits laid out for his destruction; and from being a fashionably indifferent, and occasionally wayward, became an insultingly regardless, and totally estranged husband. The mistress occupied that place in his affections, to which the wife was entitled; and before the expiration of one short year, Lord Arabin was as well known as the lover of Lady Cecilia Alington, as he was as the husband of the Marchioness of Glenallan.

To any woman this would have been a severe mortification; but to Lady Glenallan, the most beautiful of women, it was something more, and she felt it with all the bitterness, and wept over it with all the anguish, which a conviction of having contributed to occasion it was calculated to inspire.

All her pride, vanity, and affection was wounded; to have been deserted, under any circumstances, would have been mortifying; but by Lord Arabin, for whom she had sacrificed so much, and for whose love she had looked as her only recompense, in the very centre of her celebrity, and first months of her marriage, was overwhelming, humiliating. Lady Glenallan felt it so, and with the loss of her husband's affections seemed fled, for her, all the enjoyments of this life.

Her health declined, her spirits sunk; even in her child she ceased to take delight. Lord Arabin had told her, she was not fit to be a mother, and with the declaration seemed to ensue its fulfilment. What coming from another would have been despised and disregarded, from Edward, the idol of her soul, sunk deep into her heart, and without amending, depressed and destroyed it.

About this period there was a report of the Earl and Countess, now Marquess and Marchioness of Malverton, returning to England. Instead of rejoicing, Lady Glenallan sickened at the prospect; her mother had left her in the most enviable of situations, and was to find her in the most unfortunate. What circumstance more mortifying, but its being occasioned by her own miscon-

duct! none: and her parents, she knew, were not those to countenance her after guilt, however they might have defended her before it; neither if they were, would it afford Lady Glenallan any consolation.

Lord Arabin was not a man to be recalled by threats, or defiance, or any thing but love; and unless he could be recalled, the Marchioness could not be happy. Unfortunate woman! who was for ever scaring from her presence the persons on whom she yet relied for happiness! Lady Glenallan adored Lord Arabin, and yet even him, who, if behaved towards with consistency and forbearance, she might have retained and attached, she had driven from her society, and made prefer to it any resource, however unlawful, or any gratification, however unhallowed.

What would not the Marchioness have given to have been able to begin again with the Earl, to have had him once more even under the delusion he must have been in, respecting her real temper and dispositions when he married her! Oh, she thought, any thing in the world; for to see him shunning, shrinking, revolting almost from a moment's possibility of her society, nearly broke her heart.

It was no longer Lord Arabin, noble, haughty, self-willed, bewitching, flying alternately to her arms in passionate love, or from them, if provoked, in proud disdain; but Lord Arabin, wounded apparently past recall, and dreading to offend by the very freedom with which he used to delight, chilling every impulse, and restraining every feeling.

In vain Lady Glenallan wept, and prayed, and adjured, and implored his restoration of her to his confidence and society. He was not insensible indeed, nor blind to the state to which a contrary line of proceeding would soon reduce her; but he was wearied, and without hope or idea of any thing but concessions, such as he should not choose to make, producing any thing like peace—not to talk of happiness—between them.

"Either you or I, Georgiana," he would say, "must be an altered character to effect it; for I shall not sub-

mit to *your* jurisdiction, and experience has taught me you will not to mine."

"Oh, Arabin, I will, I will!" On the last of these occasions she said, "Treat me but in public as your wife, and in private I will be your slave, or any thing that the proudest, most imperious of your sex could ask."

Something like a smile played for a moment about the mouth of the Earl, and, though without speaking, he raised his eyes from the table, on which they had been resting, to hers.

"You doubt me," said she, understanding him.

He made no reply.

"It is because you do not know me," she continued, "or of what I am capable, if thoroughly incited—shall I say," and she half smiled, "compelled."

Still he did not speak.

"That you have some reason to be mistrustful, Lord Arabin," observed she, rather irritated, "you need not adopt this cruel, cutting silence to inform me; but that I have also to expect some degree of consolation, it induces me to remind you"

If the Marchioness had wished to ruin her whole cause, and instantaneously, she could not have done so more effectually.

"You mean to insinuate, Lady Glenallan," cried he passionately, "that the making me master of a few paltry thousands, has given me a right the less to control *your* actions; and you a right the more to influence mine. But take them back, enjoy them, I value them not; they were the gift of love indeed; but are now little less than the wages of misery."

The Marchioness burst into tears. "Rather say, Lord Arabin," said she, "that they are the displeasing remembrances to you, of all that you owe, and all that you ought to be to their bestower."

"I *will* not say it!" said the Earl; "the duty, of which it is necessary for your fortune to remind me, I am not the man to feel or to fulfil; but if you consider it to have such imperative claims, I only ask you to

withdraw it, to leave me free and unshackled, as when you presented it; and you will leave me more than you can ever take."

"I will, I must then!" said Lady Glenallan, and rushed from the room.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"'Twas not the soft magic of streamlet or hill!  
 Ah, no! it was something more exquisite still,  
 'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,  
 Who made each dear scene of enchantment more dear,  
 Who taught how the best works of nature improve,  
 When we see them reflected from the looks that we love."

ABOUT two months had now elapsed since the arrival of Colonel Arlington and his family in Vienna, and as soon as the Count de Meurville was considered sufficiently restored to be equal to travelling, they proposed setting out in company with him and the Countess for England. In the mean time, nothing could pass more blissfully than the life of the latter. Restored to each other, with the only alloy they had ever had to their happiness no more, in Annette Dettinghorffe, who had died a few days before the execution of the sentence passed upon her for stabbing the Count, with the friends, whom their misfortunes had first interested, so attached, as to render it impossible they should part—and with their beautiful child, all and more than their fondest wishes could have anticipated—there seemed but the perfect restoration of their own health wanting to complete their felicity, nor did this threaten to be long delayed. The Arlington party, including, besides the Colonel, his wife, and daughter, a gentleman to whom the latter was going to be shortly united, became, by degrees, domesticated with the De Meurvilles; and though their mornings were chiefly spent apart, from the former being anxious to see places and things to

which the latter, besides being no strangers, were unequal, their evenings were constantly spent together; sometimes in reading, sometimes in conversation; but always in cheerfulness and cordiality. Coming in later than the rest one evening, and seeing no seat so convenient, De Meurville threw himself carelessly on one at the feet of the Countess.

"That puts me in mind of old times," observed Colonel Arlington smiling, "when all the fatigues and exertions of the day were overpaid by one glance exchanged with Miss Mandeville."

De Meurville looked up at his wife; "She did not know in those days of which you are speaking," said he; "all the misfortunes she was entailing, by consenting to partake my fate."

"Had I foreseen all the happiness," said Agnes, "I never could have aspired to share it."

With the near prospect of visiting England, revived in the bosom of the Countess De Meurville all the associations connected with it; and when she recalled the circumstances under which she had quitted it, the relations she had lost since doing so, and the changes she should most probably find in all respects, the ideas very often overcame her. They were to stop at Hermitage, having been invited by Sir Sidney, who still resided there; and as the Arlingtons were to be at Abbeville, it would make it the pleasantest destination for them.

In the mean time, as their journey is a long one, and no particular marked incidents in it, we shall leave them for a while, and return to Lady Glenallan, whom we left releasing Lord Arabin of the fortune he so little valued, and the woman he so little loved, or rather, endeavouring at doing so; for that Lord Arabin was not so easily to be resigned, nor ever after this quarrel to be sued to, but with tears, and entreaties for reconciliation, is certain. The Marchioness lessened herself by the humiliations she condescended to, without attaching the Earl, who, only anxious to free himself from her upon any terms, now determined to compel her to what

he despised her for not being irritated. He brought to her house, and to her table, women, notorious for their connexion with himself, or with others ; and finding that even this had not the desired effect, for she could still affect blindness to their misdemeanours, insisted at length that she should visit and keep company with his sister, whose impropriety of conduct, with a nobleman of distinction, was of a nature too glaring, to render any possibility of feigning ignorance on the subject practicable. To this, as may be imagined, even Lady Glenallan would not consent ; for Lady Isabella Wandesmere to witness the state of degradation to which a condescending to protect and countenance her Ladyship in the midst of guilt and infamy would announce the Marchioness fallen, was not a humiliation, even for the sake of retaining Lord Arabin, to be stooped to. The latter foresaw it was not, and made, therefore, the admitting of his sister's society the only possible condition for the continuing of his own. A violent quarrel ensued ; the Marchioness accused him of perfidy, cruelty, ingratitude, and every thing that her half-broken heart suggested, and the Earl left her, swearing the same house should never more contain them.

Fatal words ! their fulfilment proved Lady Glenallan's death-blow, and while Lord Arabin was rejoicing at having freed himself from one whose passion for him had always been superior to his for her, the Marchioness was taken to that bed from which she was never more to rise.

How many sad recollections must not her situation then have given birth to ! Little more than two short years ago, and she had been witnessing, with hard-hearted indifference, the state to which her conduct was reducing Lord Glenallan ; and now, just, though sad, retribution, she was dying by the wounds which a hand, dear as her own had once been to him, had inflicted. No eyes but the sweet ones of her child, ever watching with fond anxiety over her looks ; and no lips but the cherub ones of her boy, ever kissing the cold dews from her brow.



Lady Malverton returned to England to find all that was mortal of her once beloved daughter consigned to the earth, and when to the natural griefs which an event so melancholy was calculated to produce, was added that which conscience, whispering she had in a degree been accessory to it, must produce,—that the sufferings of the Marchioness were almost overwhelming may be imagined. To the uncontrollable passions of Georgiana were attributable all her woes ; and how did Lady Malverton not now lament that she had ever been influenced by such mistaken ideas of parental fondness, as led her to suppose that unlimited indulgence was evincing it.

How did she not grieve, that that beautiful form, with which Heaven had once presented her, was for ever withdrawn from her eyes, and that the time could never return, in which she had had its moulding, and direction within her own power ! Oh so bitterly as to make the contemplation distracting ! The idea that Georgiana, created for an angel of light, might have become a demon of darkness—that born for the highest place in heaven, she might occupy the lowest place in hell, was an overwhelming thought indeed.

There was still, however, one atonement left in the power of the Marchioness, for all the misfortunes of which she had been the original cause to her unhappy daughter, and that was a strict fulfilment of the duties devolving upon her, as appointed guardian to her son.

To these duties, as soon as the state of her health permitted it, Lady Malverton determined to turn her whole attention, and her only remaining daughter, Lady Alicia, being married, there was nothing to interfere with the intention which duty, as well as inclination prompted. As soon as the young Lord had arrived at an age, to render the forming of an opinion practicable, he was pronounced to inherit rather the characteristics of his mother than of his father, but softened to a degree that only made the resemblance desirable ; what had been passion in her, was energy in

him, what had been haughtiness in Lady Glenallan, was dignity in her son.

After maturely weighing the advantages on both sides, Lady Malverton determined on a private education for the Marquess, conceiving that any superior advantage in public, was more than counterbalanced by the laxity of morals and blunted feelings, which it is apt to engender. Resolved on this point, her only endeavour was to procure a preceptor fitted to form his understanding and temper, and who, possessing himself, would inculcate on Lord Glenallan the high notions of honour and exalted patriotism which she conceived indispensable.

Possessing so correct a sense of what a British nobleman ought to be, and of the qualifications requisite in him—who was to form that character? The Marchioness was very fastidious in her choice of the latter, and peculiarly cautious that neither improper companions, nor false indulgences should sully the fair fabric on which she built her future hopes. For all this trouble and anxiety there seemed a probability of her Ladyship's being more than recompensed, for increasing in virtue as he increased in years, the young Marquess gave bright promise of uniting all that was great, to all that was good, and all that could adorn, to all that could dignify human nature.

We shall now return to the party whom we left setting out for England, and introducing them for the last time to our readers, among the scenery where their acquaintance with them first took place, put a speedy termination to our narrative.

It was in the lovely glowing month of June, that the Count and Countess De Meurville found themselves once more at Hermitage, once more surrounded with those sweet woods and bowers, which looked peaceful and undisturbed, as if no changes had taken place since they left them; so unable is nature to convey any idea of the emotions, with which it may have been surrounded.

Previous to reaching there, however, the Count and

Countess, from motives of curiosity and interest, had stopped for a few minutes at the cottage which had sheltered them on the night of their elopement; and though since that period, Agnes had become a mother, and acquired certainly more of steadiness and self-possession, in her manner; she was still so much the delicate, dying girl, she had then been, that they were not for a moment at a loss to recognise her, but did so with unfeigned expressions of delight.

Happy, as on the evening she had first sat there a bride, Agnes threw herself on the humble chair they placed for her, near the table. And while her little boy, on her lap, was more occupied with the fruit they put before him, began to talk to the old woman of the house, about her concerns, in a manner which proved she remembered them.

Appearing in a light so sweetly interesting, who should enter to behold it, but her *ci devant* admirer, Colonel Blomberg. Riding by, he had been attracted by the appearance of the carriage and foreign servants at the door; and conjecturing, as he knew they were expected, that the Count and Countess were arrived in England, entered for the pleasure of being the first to welcome them. Any trifling embarrassment which this meeting might seem calculated to produce, between at least two of the party, was prevented by the easy manners of the Colonel, and perfect dignity of Agnes, who, while she returned with warmth the friendliness of the Colonel, avoided any thing which might betray consciousness of it.

This meeting with old friends, however, was only the first of the many delightful ones, which the Count and Countess de Meurville were now daily in the habit of enjoying, and often overcome by the happiness which a re-meeting under such circumstances, and after such apparent probabilities of never doing so again, created.

Agnes would throw herself into the arms of De Meurville, and tell him to teach her how she could ever be grateful enough for it?

“You have beside you a better instructor to all your

duties, Agnes," said De Meurville, one day as Mr. Winter was standing near them.

"Oh no," returned the latter, shaking his head, "I might have ventured to give now and then a little advice to Miss Mandeville, but I never should presume to the Countess de Meurville."

"Call me then still Miss Mandeville!" said she, sweetly, "if by that name only you entitle me to your counsel, for that I require it yet I feel."

"No, call her Agnes," said De Meurville, smiling, "for it unites the claims of both."

At Abbeville, besides the Arlingtons, were at present stopping Lady Vignoles and her second daughter, Harriet, and though without making any further additions to their family circle than that perhaps of Mr. Winters and his son, the Vigers's would frequently invite the Count and Countess de Meurville, with their brother and sister, Sir Sydney and Arabella Mandeville to join it—(Rhoda was just now on a visit with Mrs. Balfour.) This sort of society was delightful to Agnes, from the ease and elegance which characterized it; and leading a life at once so consonant to her tastes and so favourable to her spirits, her health continued to amend and her beauty to improve. De Meurville beheld it with delight, and though it was still his intention to travel with her for some time, in warmer countries, after leaving England, that she might have nothing to embitter the period of her remaining there, was his first desire.

Talking one day of both the Count and Countess at Abbeville, Miss Vignoles expressed the delight she should feel in all things to imitate and resemble the latter.

Lady Vignoles was silent.

"You do not think her amiable, Mamma," said Harriet, so interpreting her silence.

"On the contrary," replied her mother, "I think her so lovely and amiable, that to speak of her faults seems unkind, but when I hear you express such unlimited admiration and desire for imitation, I must remind you, that the Countess de Meurville set out in life, with a violation of the most sacred of all connexions."

"But then, it was for such a man," said Harriet.

"As it has turned out," replied Lady Vignoles, "it was indeed for the *best* of men, for one, to whom all she can ever do is now become owing. But I should rather make her peculiar circumstances her palliation, for let a man be even an angel, it does not justify our desertion of those whom God and nature have equally commanded us to venerate : besides, keep in mind my Harriet, there is one determinate standard of right, and though fortunate circumstances may sometimes occur, in a departure from it, yet as they could not have been foreseen, nor being so, should influence us ; we should only observe, that the causes of our conduct are right, and take our chance for the consequences."

FINIS.















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